

THE FLETCHER SCHOOL OF LAW AND DIPLOMACY

ENDS VERSUS MEANS:

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PERSIAN GULF CRISIS (1987-1988)

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE FLETCHER SCHOOL OF LAW AND DIPLOMACY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

An analysis of the 1987-88 Persian Gulf crisis is pursued by examining the relationship between the stated political objectives and the military means (role of force) used in attempting to attain those goals. The purpose of this study is twofold: First, to evaluate the "strategic" process that led to U.S. involvement in the Gulf and determine how effective that process was in achieving the stated political goals. And second, to evaluate allied cooperation and NATO's effort to address Persian Gulf security issues and its subsequent impact on the U.S. reflagging policy. The study does not evaluate tactics but rather focuses on the strategic perspective of U.S. Persian Gulf policy in terms of the relationship between ends and means, objectives and resources, and capabilities and intentions.

U.S. policy is found to be strategically deficient as the military tactic of protecting Kuwaiti ships was not placed in a comprehensive strategic context. The confusion over the proper definition of the objective allowed the available options to remain limited to two unattractive alternatives: reflag and protect Kuwaiti ships or abandon the public commitment to Kuwait and suffer the loss of credibility in the Arab world. Moreover, the strategic course of action chosen to achieve the stated political objectives depended on Iraqi war aims and Iranian restraint

to succeed. Similarly, by framing the initial protection of shipping plan in unilateral terms and then pursuing diplomatic efforts to enlarge the commitment into a multilateral operation by securing allied assistance the United States forced a showdown with its allies over who had the greater share of responsibility in protecting Western oil supplies.

The study concludes that U.S. policy violated one of the cardinal rules of matching political objectives with military realities: avoid multiple objectives with competing priorities. Finally, the study proposes a set of alternative strategies and recommendations based on a regional and collective security approach that emphasizes low-intensity-conflict while confining the military objective to the more narrow issue of freedom of navigation in international waterways.

PREFACE

As a naval officer with a good deal of operational experience, I have had the unique opportunity to observe the use of military power as a means in seeking political objectives from operational theatres as diverse as the North Arabian Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Northern and Western Pacific Ocean. In a sense, this study began when I found myself on the implementing end of policy, albiet on the tactical level, in late February of 1979 when the Carter administration decided to dispatch the USS Constellation (CV-64) to the Gulf of Aden in response to the invasion of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) by the Soviet-backed Marxist regime of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). The decision to support North Yemen in its dispute with South Yemen had both global and regional implications for the rapidly deteriorating "twin pillars" policy adopted by the Nixon administration nine years earlier: with the Iranian revolution at fever pitch (the Shah had recently fled the country) and the Soviet penchant for meddling in the Horn of Africa apparently reaching new heights, the Carter administration deemed it essential to send a strong signal of American resolve not to allow the remaining pillar of that policy -- Saudi Arabia -- to fall.

Two years later I again found myself on the implementing end of policy this time onboard the USS Independence (CV-62) then on station in the North Arabian

Sea in response to the continuing Iran hostage crisis. In January of 1981, with the Independence still on station, the hostages were released. A few months later, the Independence was diverted to the eastern Mediterranean in response to the placement of Syrian SA-6 surface-to-air missiles in the Bekka Valley. This seemingly subtle move signalled the beginning of an ever increasing American presence in Lebanon which would culminate in the terrorist bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in 1983 and the subsequent removal of all U.S. forces from Lebanon the following year.

In late May of 1981, while on the same deployment and in a move that seemed calculated to demonstrate further the political-military flexibility of an aircraft carrier, I found myself involved in what was to be the beginning of a series of highly coordinated, Reagan administration directed freedom of navigation exercises conducted in and around the disputed waters and airspace of the Gulf of Sidra. This, of course, was merely a mild precursor to the series of more violent military confrontations between the United States and Libya prevalent throughout the decade of the 1980's. When one considers the odds of being involved in the political use of seapower on four separate occasions in less than three years, I was not surprised when in February of 1988 I found myself back in the North Arabian Sea, this time

onboard the USS Enterprise (CVN-65) in support of the U.S. reflagging operation in the Persian Gulf.

As a student of international relations, I found that the theoretical literature on the role force plays in achieving political objectives was diverse and quite comprehensive. But I also found the literature somewhat lacking in critical analyses of specific crises from the operational perspective of that often elusive point at which theory meets practice. This is not to say that the literature is bereft of analyses of crisis situations in which theory is applied to practice; indeed, there have been many seminal studies conducted using this framework. Rather than the vast majority of these analyses have been conducted from the outside looking in. Very few studies have been conducted from the implementation end looking back up at the policy end. For example, an indepth review of the available primary and secondary sources such as government reports, books and periodicals written in the wake of the 1987-88 Persian Gulf crisis reveal a plethora of information on the mechanics of the crisis but very little effort has been devoted to a systematic analysis and evaluation of the "strategic" process that led to U.S. and allied involvement in the Gulf nor a determination of how effective that process was in achieving the stated political objectives. Likewise, a review of recent U.S. and international Ph.D. abstracts and titles reveal that none have focused

specifically on the issue of political objectives and military means (to include allied cooperation) during the 1987-88 crisis nor have any of the major studies been conducted from the operational perspective. Thus it is hoped that this study will build upon and make a contribution to the existing crisis management and alliance cohesion literature by examining, from the operational perspective, the theoretical and practical factors pertaining to the U.S. and allied involvement in this unique crisis.

To a great extent, I based this study on my practical experience with the seemingly inherent difficulty and problems associated with transforming policy into action. Additionally, my studies in both the theoretical and practical aspects of crisis management, alliance cohesion, strategy and policy, international security studies, political theory and specific courses on the diplomatic history, politics and culture of Southwest Asia at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and the U.S. Naval War College created the analytical framework within which I chose to evaluate this crisis.

The overwhelming portion of the research for this study involved primary open-source information contained in a host of U.S. Government documents all pertaining to U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf. These included carefully prepared and detailed reports from the Departments of State, Defense, Energy, and the Navy as well as Congressional staff reports.

Additionally, extensive use was made of sworn testimony taken before numerous Congressional hearings convened between 1987 and 1989 on U.S. Persian Gulf policy as it pertained to the reflagging of the Kuwaiti tankers.

Specific information relating to allied cooperation in the Gulf was found in international government reports and communiques from the Assembly of the Western European Union, the various committee's of the North Atlantic Assembly, the Defense Planning Committee and North Atlantic Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, European parliamentary hearings as well as documents and reports from specific agencies of the five European nations involved in the Gulf.

While secondary sources, such as think-tank policy papers and books, newspaper and periodical analyses, and conceptual model studies were used extensively, I have, for the most part, stayed as close as possible to official policy statements as the basis for my analysis. The reader should be aware, however, that the analysis and conclusions presented in this study are done so without the benefit of access to classified information. In a sense, what precludes this study from being complete is an analysis of the classified command histories of those naval units that took part in the reflagging operation as well as internal State and Defense Department and National Security Council (NSC) memorandums and agreements with those regional and allied states that cooperated with the United States. The

continuing security interests of those nations will prohibit early declassification of these documents. Such an omission, however necessary and understandable, hampers the researcher's ability to uncover the true political objective vis-a-vis the publically stated one, thereby raising the possibility of basing one's line of reasoning on the wrong premise.

An additional limitation was the need to examine original sources published in French, German, Italian, Flemish and Dutch. However, many of these original sources were available in translation through the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) and the U.S. Information Service (U.S.I.S.). I also gained access to the translation services contained in the State Department's unclassified European wireless files during visits to NATO headquarters and U.S. embassies in several European capitals. Neither of these limitations, however, should adversely affect the conclusions and findings of this study.

An undertaking of this magnitude cannot be completed successfully without the help and dedicated support of others. Acknowledgements are therefore in order: I remain particularly grateful to Admiral Charles R. Larson, USN, the current Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet and the former Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Plans, Policy and Operations (OP-06) and his Executive Assistant Captain Spencer Johnson, USN, for their faith and confidence in my

ability to successfully complete the two-year Fletcher program. They went out on the proverbial limb on my behalf and I trust I have not let them down. In short, without the "second year," I could not have written this dissertation.

I also am personally indebted to Rear Admiral Tony Less, USN, the current Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Plans, Policy and Operations (OP-06B) and the former Commander, Joint Task Force Middle East (CJTfME) for taking time from his busy schedule to discuss with me the operational aspects of implementing the reflagging policy. In my opinion, he remains the consummate naval warrior and master of that often elusive point at which theory meets practice -- or as he no doubt would prefer -- that point at which the rubber meets the road.

I remain equally grateful to the staffs of the National Policy and Command Organization Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-602) and the Department of National Security Affairs (CODE 56BN) and the Civilian Institutions Programs Office (CODE 031) at the Naval Post Graduate School for their dedicated support throughout my stay at Fletcher. I am particularly indebted to Captains Ray Figueras and Robert Dilks, USN, and Thomas C. Bruneau for their insightful advice on selecting the best method to navigate one's way through bureaucratic mine fields. Their management of the Navy's post-masters program in international relations -- a vital source for the Navy's future strategists -- was

nothing short of superb. I remain fortunate to have taken part in the program.

The staffs of the U.S. Defense Attache and Political Military Affairs Offices in the U.S. embassies in London, Brussels, The Hague, Paris, Bonn and Rome were most helpful in providing written unclassified background information on the European contributions to the Gulf operation. In particular, Lieutenant Colonel Roger Yarbrow, USA, in Brussels, Mr. Donald E. Braum in The Hague, Mr. John Berry in Paris, Mr. James Herd in London, Ms. Silvia Eiry in Rome and Mr. Colin Cameron of the Western European Union were extremely helpful in pointing a seemingly disoriented Ph.D. student in the right direction. Likewise, Mr. Martin McCusker, Director of the Defense and Security Committee at the North Atlantic Assembly in Brussels, was kind enough to let me use their small but highly specialized library for the European portion of my research. I am particularly indebted to Captain Peter M. Swartz, USN, the Director of the Defense Operations Division at the U.S. Mission at NATO headquarters for taking time from his busy schedule to host me on my two visits to his office. His suggestions on the available and appropriate information sources and avenues of approach to the research problem proved invaluable to the successful completion of this project.

I remain deeply grateful to Professors Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., John P. Roche and Richard H. Shultz, Jr.,

who ably directed me throughout the course of this study. Their trust and confidence in my ability to conduct independent research and writing as well as their recognition of the unique time constraints associated with a naval aviation career streamlined what could have been a much more complicated and lengthy process. I alone, however, remain responsible for errors of fact, opinion, and omission as well as for the findings presented in this study. The administrative, technical, professional and moral support provided by the faculty and staff of Fletcher's International Security Studies Program Department and the Registrar's Office far exceeded normal expectations. They have given new meaning to the concept of taking care of your own. Indeed, while the Charles River gang may receive more fanfare and at times seem somewhat aloof, the Mystic River gang made me feel right at home.

I also am indebted to Professor Andrew Hess, the Director of Fletcher's Southwest Asia Program, his friend William A. Kirby, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs and Ambassador William Rugh, currently the Director of the Office of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Information Agency, for their support and encouragement. Their many hours of enlightening and insightful classroom, lecture and after hours discussions pertaining to Southwest Asia and Islamic civilization provided me with a refreshing and

balanced perspective to an often perplexing, elusive, and volatile subject.

Anyone even remotely familiar with the mechanics of piecing together a dissertation or a manuscript of any sort appreciates the immense and painstaking effort that goes into ensuring the prescribed format and style are adhered to. Ellen McDonald and Paula Cammarata of the Fletcher School's Edwin Ginn Library staff were particularly helpful in this regard. They introduced me to the intricacies of Kate Turabian and patiently and professionally fielded my seemingly endless questions on style and format. Likewise, I also am indebted to William V. Luti and Donna King who, despite my shortcomings in grammar and syntax, read the entire manuscript (several times) and offered constructive suggestions in both areas. Once again, however, I alone am responsible for any contortions of the English language. Finally, Mrs. Carol Levesque worked faithfully and diligently in the word processing stage of this project despite her busy schedule and my penchant for red ink.

I am also indebted to my parents, siblings and daughter for their unyielding support and encouragement throughout the course of this two-and-a-half year project. In particular, I owe a special debt of gratitude to my parents for providing a continuing series of palatable explanations for my eight-year-old daughter on why and how her father could spend so much time in the library reading a seemingly

abnormal amount of "grown-up" books when he could have been home reading something as delightful and heartwarming as The Wolf Story to her at bedtime. They give new meaning to the age-old addage that nothing makes a child as smart as having grandparents.

As a final note, I would like to point out that the inspiration for pursuing this study grew out of my personal participation in both the Earnest Will convoy and Praying Mantis combat operations conducted from January through June of 1988 in the Persian Gulf. My motivation is simply to participate in and contribute to the continuing effort to close the ever-narrowing gap between civilian and military thinking on the role force plays in seeking political objectives in this era of "violent peace." Matthew B. Ridgeway's simple yet eloquent expression that the "soldier is the statesman's junior partner" drives to the heart of the matter and provides further inspiration for this study.

Finally, the contents of this study reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the U.S. Department of Defense or the U.S. Navy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACE AMF	Allied Command Europe Mobile Force
ARAMCO	Arabian-American Oil Company
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
BBSAG	Battleship Surface Action Group
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CENTCOM	Central Command
CG	Guided Missile Cruiser
CIWS	Close-In Weapons System
CJTfME	Commander Joint Task Force Middle East
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
COMMIDEASTFOR	Commander Middle East Force
CVBG	Carrier (Fixed Wing) Battle Group
CVN	Nuclear Powered (Fixed Wing) Carrier
DDG	Guided Missile Destroyer
DOD	Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
DPC	Defense Planning Committee (NATO)
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FFG	Guided Missile Fast Frigate
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GOSP	Gas Oil Separation Platform
IFF	Identification Friend or Foe
INF	Intermediate Nuclear Forces
IRG	Iranian Revolutionary Guard
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KOTC	Kuwaiti Oil Tanker Company
LID	Light Infantry Division
LPG	Liquified Petroleum Gas
LPH	Landing Platform Helicopter
LSD	Landing Ship Dock
MCM	Minecountermeasures
MPS	Maritime Prepositioning Ships
NAC	North Atlantic Council (NATO)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCA	National Command Authority
NSC	National Security Council
NTPS	Near-Term Prepositioning Ships
O+MN	Operations and Maintenance Navy
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PDRY	Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen
RDF	Rapid Deployment Force
RDJTF	Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force
ROE	Rules of Engagement
SAMS	Surface-to-Air Missiles
SECDEF	Secretary of Defense
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication

SOF	Special Operations Force
SOG	Special Operations Groups
SSM	Surface-to-Surface Missiles
STVD	Soviet Southern Theatre of Military Operations
TVD	Soviet Theatre of Military Operations
UAE	United Arab Emirates
USCINCLANT	U.S. Commander-in-Chief Atlantic
USCINCPAC	U.S. Commander-in-Chief Pacific
USIA	U.S. Information Agency
USIS	U.S. Information Service
ULCC	Ultra Large Crude Carrier
VLCC	Very Large Crude Carrier
WEU	Western European Union
YAR	Yemen Arab Republic

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

. . . At the outset of a war its character and scope should be determined on the basis of the political probabilities. The closer these political probabilities drive war toward the absolute, the more the belligerent states are involved and drawn in to its vortex, the clearer appear the connections between its separate actions, and the more imperative the need not to take the first step without considering the last.¹

von Clausewitz, On War, 1831

The Problem

On 14 April, 1988, the U.S.S. Samuel B. Roberts (FFG-58) was hit and severely damaged by a mine while operating 55 miles northeast of Qatar. The mine was a 385 pound device that exploded on the port side of the keel adjacent to the engine room as the ship was maneuvering to avoid other mines spotted by lookouts. The explosion ripped a 30 by 23 foot hole in the ship below the waterline, destroyed a 15 foot section of the keel, pushed the main shaft back

1

Carl von Clausewitz, On War (edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret with introductory essays by Peter Paret, Michael Howard and Bernard Brodie and a commentary by Bernard Brodie). (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 584.

2

Pat Towell, "New Gulf Incident Rekindles an Old Debate," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 23 April 1988, p. 1058

approximately 18 inches, knocked the reduction gear housing³ off its mounting, and seriously injured ten young sailors. To keep the ship's stern from breaking off, the crew welded steel plates and strung cables across the damaged area in what has been described as a classic text-book case of damage control. The crews heroic efforts saved the ship and avoided further injuries and potential loss of life.⁴

Four days later, the U.S. Navy, in combined air and surface attacks, engaged the Iranian Navy in a day-long battle in the southern Persian Gulf. Immediately after the fog of battle had lifted and the results of the navy's superb combat performance became clear, a host of questions surfaced as to the relationship between our stated political objectives and the military means (role of force) used in attempting to achieve those objectives. This debate reflected the age-old attempt to rationalize the political context within which military force is applied. It has long been recognized that the use of force is not an end in itself but a means by which states pursue political objectives. In recent years, a lack of consensus has emerged on how force is to be applied within this political

3

Rear Admiral George N. Gee, USN, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1989, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1989), Part Six, p. 185.

4

Towell, p. 1058.

context. (No doubt as a result of the continuing manifestation of the Vietnam War syndrome.) This lack of consensus is dramatically illustrated by the long-standing institutional differences between intra-governmental agencies in the political-military decision-making arena in Washington, D.C. A recent study concluded that a dysfunction exists between civilian and military thinking on the use of force as an instrument of national policy.⁵ Civilian planners prefer to work from a set of options that maximize flexibility and reduces the risk of failure. They tend to view the instruments of war as a means to send diplomatic signals. Conversely, military planners prefer to deal with concrete objectives and view the purpose of force to prevail rather than send subtle diplomatic signals. To the military planner, the use of force is designed to increase an adversary's perception that the foreign policy of the United States is backed by a potent military force

⁵ The study was conducted by the U.S. Naval War College Strategic Studies Group which had been tasked by then Chief-of-Naval Operations, Admiral James D. Watkins, to analyze the peacetime use of naval forces and to develop a "proactive" means of employing these forces to avoid crises. The CNO felt that naval forces were being used as a "force of convenience" rather than as a part of an overall strategy. For more information see: Marshall Bremment, "Civilian-Military Relations in the Context of National Security Policymaking," Naval War College Review, Winter 1988, p. 27.

structure with the political will and resolve to use those
means when vital national interests are at stake.

Purpose

The Persian Gulf crisis of July 1987 through December 1988 reminds us once again of the essential need to establish a sound balance between political objectives and military means. The elemental concept that a clear sense of purpose must form the basis of all plans of action has been the cornerstone of strategic thought for over 2,500 years. Throughout the centuries, strategists have made it abundantly clear that the relationship between military and political objectives is central to the decision to resort to force in the conduct of international relations. Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold: First, to examine the relationship between the stated political objectives of the U.S. Persian Gulf policy and the military means (role of force) used in attempting to attain those goals. And second, to formulate causal statements and hypotheses pertaining to the sources (both theoretical and practical) of allied cooperative and noncooperative behavior and then test these hypotheses against the Persian Gulf crisis case study.

6

Harry G. Summers Jr., "Employing Force to Advance Policy," U.S. News and World Report, 7 April 1986, p. 27.

To accomplish the first task, the study will address the following research questions posed on both the strategic and tactical level: Strategically, what issues are truly vital national interests? Are the threats to U.S. interests in the region substantial? Can it be proven that a disruption of tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz would be an economic disaster for the West? (1973 proved painful but not unbearable). Would Soviet intervention in Iran really trigger a U.S. response, given public and congressional antipathy toward Iran? Would the politically sophisticated ruling families of the Gulf oil shiekdoms really allow Soviet political and military agents to establish a beach-head in the region? Is the U.S.-Soviet competition in the region a zero-sum game? What is the relationship between Kuwaiti tanker protection and U.S. strategic objectives? On the tactical level, what are we trying to accomplish? What is the military objective? Who are we trying to influence or coerce? How are we trying to influence or coerce them? How much and what type of force do we employ? How do we define success? When is the crisis over? When can forces be withdrawn? And how do we modify the strategy if conditions change? Admittedly, the scope of these research questions, at first glance, appears quite extensive. However, both the research process and the answers are intended to serve as a foundation upon which to focus the analytical effort on the specific issue of political ends

and military means in the Persian Gulf.

Moreover, this study seeks to evaluate the "strategic" process that led to U.S. involvement in the Gulf and determine how effective that process was in achieving the stated political goals. The approach to this task is taken from the perspective of classical policy and strategy formulation: the process by which "ends are related to means, intentions to capabilities, and objectives to resources."⁷

Additionally, this study includes several basic assumptions: First, that the publicly stated objectives of the policy are in fact the real ones upon which the strategy is based. Second, that the complexity of international relations often makes it difficult to establish a relationship between cause and effect in both theory and practice. Third, that the analysis, where possible, avoids ex post facto judgments and attempts to evaluate the strategy according to the goals set by the policymakers. And finally, that the grouping of dysfunctional thinking on the role of force into civilian and military categories is a generalization made only for analytical purposes. This is a

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John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment, A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. viii.

complex issue that transcends and often crosses military,
civilian, and intra-governmental agency lines.⁸

The second portion of the analysis focuses on allied cooperation and NATO's efforts to address Persian Gulf security issues as they pertained to the U.S. decision to reflag eleven Kuwaiti oil tankers. The following research questions form the basis for this portion of the political-military analysis: How can we understand the initial American failure to elicit European support for the reflagging operation? Moreover, how can we explain the gradual shift of position by the Europeans to one of (tacit) support for U.S. policy under the auspices of the Western European Union (WEU)? In short, why did a political agreement and its subsequent transformation into an operational agreement emerge? The answers to these questions can be found by an analysis of the four hypotheses explaining alliance cooperation and then applying them to the case study.

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Perhaps the most celebrated case of this dysfunction was reflected in a series of extraordinary speeches made by former Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger throughout 1984 in the aftermath of several bloody terrorist attacks on U.S. citizens overseas. The issues focused on the appropriate use of military force to counter overseas threats. In an ironic reversal of roles, Shultz maintained that the use of force is an important factor in diplomatic endeavors and should be used as a specific tool to fight terrorism while Weinberger admonished policymakers on the limits of military force and the need for extreme caution and care in employing it. Shultz's views were expressed in public speeches at Yeshiva University in New York on 9 December, at

The first section of this analysis outlines the evolution of NATO policy toward Southwest Asia and identifies examples of both cooperative and noncooperative behavior. The second section establishes four central hypotheses that seek to explain intra-alliance behavior. These hypotheses are derived from both systemic and domestic models of international politics:

The external threat hypothesis suggests that alliance cohesion rises and falls with the external threats to collective security. The alliance security dilemma hypothesis proposes that cohesion is a function of the coercive potential of the alliance leader and its ability to exact cooperative behavior from its weaker partners. The collective action hypothesis suggests that alliance behavior is fundamentally a public goods problem. The domestic politics hypothesis asserts that alliance behavior is determined primarily by political and economic factors at the domestic level.

The third section tests these hypotheses against the reflagging case study to determine which one (or combinations thereof) best explains the behavior that eventually led to allied cooperation in the Persian Gulf. In the final section, some general conclusions are drawn regarding the sources of alliance cohesion and the forecasting capability of these alliance cooperation propositions. Admittedly, the theoretical scope of this portion of the study is limited, primarily due to the

the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York on 25 October, and to the Trilateral Commission in Washington on 3 April. Weinberger outlined his philosophy in a speech to the National Press Club on 28 November. For more information see: "Shultz vs. Weinberger - When to use U.S. Power," U.S. News and World Report, 24 December, 1984, pp. 20-21.

concentration on one case study. However, the purpose of this portion of the study is simply to attempt to formulate and then validate a series of causal statements pertaining to the sources of cooperative and noncooperative behavior within the confines of the Persian Gulf case study.

Organization

The study is organized on a topical and compartmented basis. In the second chapter, the historical evolution of U.S. policy and involvement in the Persian Gulf is traced. Particular emphasis is placed on the rise of U.S. diplomatic activity in the Middle East coinciding with a corresponding decrease in British influence in the region and the effect U.S. regional doctrines had on shaping U.S. policy. An examination of this historical evolution reveals a clear pattern in U.S. policy (and perception of interests) that transcends any presidential administration or political party. Within this context, U.S. strategic, political, and economic interests in the Gulf region are defined and the threats to those interests examined.

The third chapter deals with the actual mechanics of the Persian Gulf crisis. Specific elements of the crisis are examined including the reflagging proposal, the protection of shipping mission, the military arrangements, and the implementation of the plan. Additionally, a step-by-step appraisal of the escalation process is made in order

to lay the technical foundation for the political-military analysis contained in Chapter Five.

Chapter Four outlines the conceptual framework and reviews the literature upon which the analysis in Chapter Five is based. This section addresses the concept of the objective, frames the issues, explores the role force plays in obtaining political objectives, and identifies the analytical model chosen to organize and evaluate the relationship between the political objectives and military means in the Persian Gulf. Chapter Five is a detailed analysis of the relationship between ends and means in the Gulf based on the analytical models outlined in the previous chapter.

Chapter Six outlines the conceptual framework and reviews the literature upon which the alliance cohesion analysis in Chapter Seven is based. This section identifies examples of both cooperative and noncooperative behavior and establishes the four central hypotheses that seek to explain intra-alliance behavior. These hypotheses are derived from both systemic and domestic models of international politics.

Chapter Seven tests these hypotheses against the reflagging case study to determine which one (or combination thereof) best explains the behavior that led to allied cooperation in the Persian Gulf and its impact on U.S. policy. Also, some general conclusions are drawn regarding the sources of alliance cohesion and the forecasting

capability of the alliance cooperation propositions.

The final chapter proposes a set of alternative strategies and recommendations to solve the Gulf security dilemma through a regional and collective approach which emphasizes low-intensity-conflict while confining the military objective to the more narrow issue of freedom of navigation in international waterways. This section rests upon the spirit of Clausewitz's insightful dictum that one cannot "condemn a method without being able to suggest a better alternative."⁹

In summary, the prevailing theme of this study is that a balanced, clear, and well-articulated strategy for achieving political objectives remains the essential ingredient for attainment of that often elusive foreign policy "victory." Perhaps former Secretary of the Navy James H. Webb, Jr., summed it up best when he solemnly pointed out that a well-defined and properly articulated strategy assumes a moral obligation: "If we cannot tell our people what our objectives are around the world and clearly indicate to them why these objectives are important to our nation, we cannot expect them to invest the lives of their sons and daughters in the national interest."¹⁰

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Von Clausewitz, p. 161.

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James H. Webb, Jr., "National Strategy, The Navy, and the Persian Gulf," World Affairs Journal, Fall 1987, p. 39.

CHAPTER II

U.S. PERSIAN GULF POLICY

. . . It is a narrow policy to suppose that this country or that is to be marked out as the eternal ally or the perpetual enemy of England. We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow.¹

Lord Palmerston, 1848

Historical Background

The historical evolution of U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf region has its roots deeply embedded in the 150 year domination of the region by the British. Not only did the United States assume "the mantle of leadership and much of its strategic infrastructure from the British but also its way of thinking about its interests and how to pursue them."² The two major interests of the United States -- preventing the expansion of Soviet influence and ensuring access to oil -- can be seen as an extension of "The Great Game" as played by the British throughout the nineteenth

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Philip Guedalla, Palmerston (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), p. 301.

2

Gary Sick, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs, The Evolution of U.S. Policy in the Persian Gulf, Hearing (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 14 July 1988), p. 37; hereafter referred to as Sick Statement.

century and as a reflection of British projection of its lines of communications and markets east of Suez. As a result of this historical evolution, "there is a line of continuity in U.S. policy and its perception of national interests in the Persian Gulf region that transcends any administration or political philosophy."³

U.S. military as well as business interests in the Persian Gulf date from the pre-World War II years and the establishment of the Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO) in Saudi Arabia in the 1930's. During the war, the region became one of the major lend-lease supply routes to the Soviet Union through which tremendous amounts of military equipment and related supplies found their way into the Red Army. With the ouster of Reza Shah (due to his German leanings) and the replacement by his son on the peacock throne, the British and Soviets effectively divided Iran into spheres of influence for the duration of the war. U.S. presence in the Gulf during these years witnessed the largest sustained deployment of U.S. military forces -- 40,000 troops of the U.S. Middle East Command -- in history⁴ to the region.

Close cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the United States during the course of the war led to the building

³
Ibid., p. 38.

⁴
Ibid.

of an airfield at Dahrain and the establishment of an American naval presence in the Persian Gulf. The naval presence was formalized in 1949 with the establishment of the U.S. Middle East Force (USMIDEASTFOR) homeported at the British naval base at Jufair, Bahrain. This presence, coupled with additional American and U.N. diplomatic pressure and some astute Iranian diplomatic maneuvering, was an important motivating factor in forcing the Soviet Union to withdraw its occupation forces from northern Iran at the end of World War II.⁵ Even at this early stage, U.S. Persian Gulf policy reflected the growing concern over the containment of Soviet expansionism and spread of international communism around the world. This concern was enunciated in the Truman Doctrine and manifested itself in the pursuit of regional collective security arrangements such as the Baghdad Pact (forerunner to the Central Treaty Organization-CENTO) and in the conclusion of bilateral agreements with Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.⁶

⁵ Jeffrey Schloesser, "U.S. Policy in the Persian Gulf," Department of State Bulletin, October 1987, p. 39.

⁶ Emile A. Nakhleh, The Persian Gulf and American Policy (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), p. 96.

Regional Doctrines

In 1957, President Eisenhower, in an attempt to fill the void left by the British and French withdrawal in the wake of the 1956 Suez crisis, formulated a policy of economic and military assistance for those Middle Eastern nations attempting to protect themselves against "international communism." In a special message on the situation in the Middle East delivered in person before a joint session of Congress, on January 5, 1957, Eisenhower proposed that the United States, through the joint action of the President and Congress, grant:

. . . such assistance and cooperation to include the employment of the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations requesting such aid against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism.⁷

Later that same year, the Eisenhower Doctrine was expanded in scope to include support for regimes under internal political subversion as a result of the administration's "publicly expressed intolerance" of Arab neutralism in a region believed crucial to the success of U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War.⁸ The Eisenhower

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Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Dwight David Eisenhower, 1957 (Washington: National Archives and Records Service, GPO, 1958, pp. 12-13.

8

Jed C. Snyder, Defending the Fringe: NATO, The Mediterranean, and the Persian Gulf (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1987), p. 85.

Doctrine received its first test, in terms of application of funds, in support of King Hussein's struggle with left-wing radicals in Jordan; and a second test, in terms of direct military intervention, came in the successful 1958 attempt to stabilize the Civil War in Lebanon.

This rise in U.S. diplomatic activity in the Middle East coincided with a corresponding decrease in British influence in the region. Due to economic and budgetary crises at home, Britain recognized the need to substantially reduce its overseas military commitments. By the early 1960's, the United States feared continued British withdrawal from the region would require an increased American presence to fill the political-military void. With the announcement in 1968 that British forces would be withdrawn from the area "east of Suez" by 1971, that fear became a reality. The Vietnam War had caused severe strains in both the economy and foreign policy of the United States and raised serious questions about the utility of future American intervention around the globe.⁹ These questions, coupled with the British withdrawal from the Middle East, forced a strategic reassessment of U.S. global policy that culminated in the formulation of the Nixon Doctrine. In the First Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy for the 1970's of 18 February, 1970, the Nixon

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Ibid., pp. 87-88.

administration clearly articulated the direction that U.S. foreign policy would take during the next decade by stating the central thesis of the Nixon Doctrine previously announced on Guam:

The United States will participate in the defense and development of allies and friends, but America cannot -- and will not -- conceive all the plans, design all the programs, execute all the decisions and undertake all the defenses of the free nations of the world. We will help where it makes a real difference and is considered in our interest.¹⁰

This strategy for regional security had direct application in the Persian Gulf where the two superpowers were becoming more involved in the affairs of the region. To secure U.S. vital interests in the Persian Gulf, the strategy was to establish strong regional allies through massive programs of economic and military assistance to both Iran and Saudi Arabia in the hope they could develop viable military forces to serve as the Gulf states' protectors and as a deterrent to Soviet intervention.¹¹ This "Twin Pillars" policy survived numerous strains throughout the 1970's, including the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and Arab oil embargo, only to ultimately fail with the fall of Iran in 1979.

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Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard Milhous Nixon, 1970 (Washington: National Archives and Records Service, GPO, 1971), pp. 118-119.

11

Snyder, pp. 89-90.

A series of essentially simultaneous crises during the last year of the Carter Administration -- the fall of Iran, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan -- forced yet another strategic reassessment of U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf. In his 23 January, 1980 State of the Union Address, President Carter declared that:

An attempt by outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.¹²

While the Carter Doctrine has been regarded as an important step in Persian Gulf regional security, it should be noted that "the strategic effect of declarations made only after a crisis -- rather than prior to them -- is limited. The test will come if and when the Soviet Union chooses to probe the limits of the Doctrine's application."¹³ To prepare for that test, and to put teeth into the Doctrine, the Carter administration established the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. As the new command, formally referred to as the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF), took shape it became readily apparent that a

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Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Jimmy Carter, 1980-81 (Washington: National Archives and Records Service, GPO, 1981), p. 197.

13

Snyder, p. 81.

whole host of logistical and force structure problems would have to be dealt with before any bite would be put into the new doctrine.¹⁴

The Reagan Administration, recognizing that current funding was inadequate to meet the threat, focused additional attention on the problem by upgrading the RDJTF and in 1983 by creating a new geographic unified command with the RDJTF commander becoming the commander of the new U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) (see Table 1). Recognizing the range of threats facing the friendly states of the region, the Reagan Administration shifted emphasis of its policy to reflect the need to develop a force projection capability as a deterrent to any outside pressure directed against the states of the region.¹⁵ Additionally, the Reagan Administration made two policy decisions in the early 1980's that underscored this "concept of regional deterrence" -- the sale and deployment of Airborne Warning

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Ibid., p. 117. For a detailed discussion of the requirements and capabilities of the Rapid Deployment Force from conception through the mid-1980's see: Kenneth Waltz, "A Strategy for the Rapid Deployment Force," International Security 5, Spring, 1981; Jeffrey Record, The Rapid Deployment Force, (Cambridge, MA: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1981); Thomas L. McNaughter, Arms and Oil: U.S. Military Strategy in the Persian Gulf, (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1985); Jeffrey Record, "The Rapid Deployment Force: U.S. Power Projection and the Persian Gulf," in Uri Ra'anana, Robert Pfaltzgraff Jr., and Geoffrey Kemp, eds., Projection of Power: Perspectives, Perceptions, and Problems, (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1982).

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Snyder, p. 120.

and Control Aircraft (AWACS) to Saudi Arabia and a five-year military aid package for Pakistan -- all of which contributed to the administration's "two-prong policy of increased security assistance for key Western-oriented states in the region and the deployment of U.S. military hardware to project the U.S. intention of underwriting the security of regional surrogates."¹⁶ The administration also recognized that any "attempt to protect states in the region can be successful only if pursued without the traditional instruments of Great Power diplomacy."¹⁷

U.S. Interests

A review of recent official policy statements clearly indicate an intra-departmental consensus on U.S. strategic, political and economic interests in the Gulf region.¹⁸ In a series of posture statements, dating from President Carter's

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Ibid., p. 112.

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Ibid.

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Official State Department policy statements on the Persian Gulf can be located in the following Department of State Bulletins: February 1980, Special Section (President Carter's State of the Union Address, 23 January, 1980) P.A.; March 1987, p. 19 (Secretary Shultz's statement, 27 January); April 1987, p. 52 (President Reagan's statements of 23 January and 25 February); August 1987, p. 78 (Undersecretary for Political Affairs Michael H. Armacost's statement, 16 June); Department of State Special Report No. 166, July 1987 on "U.S. Policy in the Persian Gulf" by Jeffrey Schloesser, Political-Military Officer in the

TABLE 1

COMBAT FORCES POTENTIALLY AVAILABLE TO USCINCCENT

<u>Army</u>	<u>Air Force</u>
1 Airborne Division	7 Tactical Fighter Wings ^b
1 Airmobile/Air Assault Division	2 Strategic Bomber Squadrons ^c
1 Mechanized Infantry Division	
2 Infantry Divisions	<u>Navy</u>
	3 Carrier Battle Groups
	1 Surface Action Group
	5 Maritime Patrol Air Squadrons
<u>Marine Corps</u>	
1 1/3 Marine Amphibious Forces ^a	

^aA Marine Amphibious Force typically consists of a reinforced Marine division, a force service support group, and a Marine aircraft wing (containing roughly twice as many tactical fighter/attack aircraft as an Air Force tactical wing, as well as a helicopter unit)

^bIncludes support forces. Does not include 3 1/2 tactical fighter wings available as attrition fillers.

^cThese bombers would be accompanied by reconnaissance, command and control, and tanker aircraft.

SOURCE: FY 1988 DOD Annual Report to Congress
(Washington, D.C.: GPO 1988)

State of the Union Address of January 23, 1980 through recent White House and State and Defense Department Reports, the U.S. position reflects a concise and seemingly well-thought-out policy that combines diplomatic, political, and military means to safeguard these fundamental interests. However, what is not as clear, is to what degree these interests are defined (survival, vital, major, or peripheral) and how best to defend against the many levels of threats presently facing the United States in the
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region.

Regional Affairs Office of Near East and South Asian Affairs and U.S. Department of State Current Policy Document No. 390 on "U.S. Policy Toward the Persian Gulf," May 1982, statement by Nicholas A. Veliotis, Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and South Asian Affairs. See also: U.S. Dept. of Defense, Annual Report to Congress (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1988, 1989, 1990).

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In a paper presented to the Ninth National Security Affairs Conference, October 8-9, 1982, cosponsored by the National Defense University and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Donald E. Nuechterlein defined four levels or intensities of interests as follows:

. . . survival interests, when the existence of a country is in jeopardy as the result of an overt military attack, or threat of attack if an enemy's demands are rejected; vital interests, when serious harm likely will result unless strong measures, including the use of conventional military force, are employed to counter an antagonist's provocative action; major interests, when a country's political, economic and social well-being may be adversely affected by external events or trends; peripheral interests, when a nation's well-being is not adversely affected by events and trends abroad, although harm may be sustained by private U.S. companies with overseas operations.

Strategic

U.S. strategic interests center around the position that the region is of vital economic importance to the Free World. With the Strait of Hormuz remaining the major chokepoint for oil moving from the Gulf oil fields, any attempt to block the Strait to international shipping would pose a grave danger to the economic well-being of the Free World. Keeping the region free of domination by a power hostile to the United States, the Western allies, and regional friends, is deemed essential to maintain the uninterrupted flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz. 20

Due to the West's dependency on oil, the region is of great strategic importance to the Soviet Union. Additionally, and for a variety of political, economic and security concerns, the Soviets have historically attempted to expand their borders and influence into the Gulf region. 21 In recent years, this expansion has been highlighted by their nine year occupation of Afghanistan and the establishment of a Southern Theatre of Military Operations (STVD) command structure in opposition to the USCENTCOM's area of responsibility. Presently under the

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Schloesser, p. 38.

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General George B. Crist, USMC, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, Status of the United States Central Command, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print Off., 22 February 1988), p. 13. Hereafter referred to as Crist Statement.

command of General of the Army Mikhail Zaytsev, the STVD High Command of Forces is currently considered to be roughly comparable, in terms of force expansion, readiness, and modernization, to the other Soviet TVD's in Central Europe and the Far East.²² While the removal of all Soviet combat forces from Afghanistan has reduced the Soviet Union's ability to project power into the Gulf region, the Soviets still have 26 active divisions (25 ground and one airborne), fifteen fighter and fighter-bomber regiments, over 700 tactical aircraft, plus the four divisions that have been withdrawn from Afghanistan all available for contingency operations in the Gulf region.²³ Additionally, the Soviets have recently stepped-up their diplomatic efforts to expand their influence throughout the region by political means as evidenced by the establishment of diplomatic relations with several of the Gulf states.²⁴

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Ibid.

23

U.S. Dept. of Defense, Annual Report to the Congress (Washington: 1990), p. 25.

24

Frederick Axelgard, United States Policy in the Persian Gulf: An Analytical Look Ahead to 1989-1992 (Washington: National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations, 1988), p. 10.

Likewise, Iran's expansionism poses a serious threat to U.S. strategic interests in the Gulf region. Recognizing the Iranian revolution as an irrefutable "fact of history" and Iran's size and strategic location in the region vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, the United States seeks, over time, to normalize relations with Iran.²⁵ However, as long as Iran seeks to export its revolutionary ideology to moderate Gulf states and continues its support for international terrorism, U.S. interests in the region will remain at risk and normalization of relations will not be possible. In short, "the effects of either Soviet or Iranian hegemony in the Gulf would be a strategic setback to U.S. and Western interests."²⁶

Economic

In defining U.S. economic interests in the region, U.S. policymakers point to the Middle East oil crises of 1973 and 1978-79 as examples of the potential economic disaster facing the West in the event of even a minor disruption of the Gulf oil supply. The inability of the economy to adjust to the sudden and large increase in the price of oil during these crises, wrecked havoc with the world economy and led

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U.S. Dept. of Defense, Report to the Congress on Security Arrangements in the Persian Gulf (Washington: 15 June 1987), p. 3. Hereafter referred to as The Weinberger Report.

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Ibid.

to sharp and painful increases in inflation and unemployment and several years of recession for the Western industrial powers as well as for the Third World.²⁷ Many government policy statements quote a recent statement by former President Reagan to illustrate their point:

. . . I think everyone . . . can remember the woeful impact of the Middle East oil crisis of a few years ago -- the endless, demoralizing gas lines, the shortages, the rationing, the escalating energy prices and double-digit inflation, and the enormous dislocation that shook our economy to its foundation.²⁸

The Gulf states supply over 25% of all the oil available on today's world market. Japan depends on oil shipped through the Strait of Hormuz for 60% of its consumption, Western Europe depends on the Strait for 11% and the United States for 5%. According to the American Petroleum Institute, 6 to 7 million barrels of oil per day pass through the Strait of Hormuz.²⁹ Approximately 25% of Western Europe's oil consumption and 50% of Japan's originates in the Persian Gulf region (see Table 2). According to a recent Department of Energy (DOE) Energy Security Study, as consumption increases and reserves decline, the U.S. Persian Gulf oil

²⁷ Schloesser, p. 38.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "Supply Vulnerability in Mideast Gulf Full of Imponderables," Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, 8 June 1987, pp. 5-6.

consumption rate of 5% is expected to increase significantly
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over the next five years. DOE analysts predict that the
West's dependence on Gulf oil will continue to rise as 60% to
70% of the world's known oil reserves are located within the
31
borders of the Gulf states.

Other exports, such as natural gas, cotton, coffee, and
phosphates also play a major role on the international
market. While recent reductions in the price and
consumption of oil has caused a local trade deficit, the
trade between the United States and these regional states is
valued at over \$6 billion with the United States enjoying a
32
\$3.6 billion trade surplus.

Political

According to U.S. policymakers, the security and
stability of the moderate Arab states of the Gulf Region are
critical to the achievement of U.S. strategic and economic
goals. Due to their great wealth and oil reserves, the Gulf
states weild considerable influence both within and outside

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The Weinberger Report, pp. 5-6.

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U.S. Dept. of Energy, International Energy Outlook
1989: Projections to 2000 (Washington: 8 March 1989), p. 5.

32

Crist Statement, p. 11.

TABLE 2
DEPENDENCY ON PERSIAN GULF OIL, 1988 - 89
(Million barrels per day)

	Total Oil Consumption	Total Oil Imports	Imports From Persian Gulf	Persian Gulf Oil as Percent of Total Consumption ¹	Oil Through Hormuz as Percent of Total Consumption
United States	16.7	6.9	1.3	7	5
Western Europe ²	12.2	8.6	3.0	25	11
Japan	4.5	4.6	2.3	51	60

¹Persian Gulf includes Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Neutral Zone.

²Western Europe includes France, West Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

SOURCE: Consumption figures taken from U.S. Department of Energy, International Energy Outlook 1989, Table 7, p. 20. Import figures for first half of 1988 taken from U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, International Energy Statistical Review March 29, 1989, p. 4, and Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, June 8, 1987, p. 5.

the region. U.S. policy has been to promote regional security while assisting friendly states in their efforts to resist Soviet and Iranian expansionism. In the wake of the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf States formed the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in an effort to provide for their own collective self-defense against the fall-out of the war. This cooperative action was deemed essential by the regional states given Iran's public pronouncements regarding the "illegitimacy" of the moderate Arab states as well as Iran's support for subversion and terrorism directed against the United States and other friendly states.³⁴ U.S. military assistance programs provide the means by which these states can provide for their common defense. Executive branch agencies contend that congressional blocking of future arms transfers will have the "unintended effect of increasing the USSR's and Iran's leverage in the region, particularly as it will raise questions about the nature of U.S.³⁵ commitments."

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Schloesser, p. 39.

34. The Weinberger Report, p. 4.

35

Ibid.

Threats to U.S. Interests

Various U.S. government reports define the threats to U.S. interests in the region in essentially three political and diplomatic categories: renewed open conflict in the Iran-Iraq War, Iran's quest for hegemony, and Soviet 36 exploitation of regional insecurities and sensitivities.

While it remains clear that oil prices have not been drastically affected by the Iran-Iraq War, the renewal of hostilities between the two belligerents "directly endangers freedom of navigation for non-belligerents and the access to 37 oil." The Tanker War (initiated by Iraq), involved attacks by Iraq on ships serving Iranian ports and oil loading facilities and retaliatory attacks by Iran on a wide variety of neutral shipping serving both belligerent and non-belligerent Persian Gulf ports in international waters (see Table 3).

Since September 1986 the United States has maintained that:

Iran has deliberately targeted shipping serving Kuwaiti ports in large measure to intimidate Kuwait from its logistical and financial support for Iraq, as well as to enhance its influence over the other GCC states by threatening similar action. The tanker attacks were matched by other elements of Iranian-backed intimidation, including rocket attacks, sabotage, and

36

Ibid., pp. 7-9.

37

Ibid.

TABLE 3

ATTACKS ON SHIPS IN THE PERSIAN GULF REGION BY BELLIGERENT, 1981 - 88

Attacker	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988*	Total
Iraq	5	22	16	53	33	66	89	38	322
Iran	0	0	0	18	14	45	92	52	231
Total	5	22	16	71	47	111	181	90	543
* Cease fire went into effect 20 August 1988									

SOURCES for 1981-87: The Washington Post, 13 October 1987, p. 12, and The New York Times, 10 January 1988, p. E3. (Data from Lloyd' Shipping Intelligence Unit for 1981 - 86, and Center for Defense Information for 1986 and 1987.) Source for 1988: Center for Defense Information, 13 January 1989; Proceedings, May 1989

other forms of violence and subversion . . . The overall intimidation effort has not changed Kuwaiti policy or practice, but it did force the government of Kuwait to seek protection for its interests, both from the GCC and other outside powers.³⁸

Iran's quest for hegemony in the Gulf region, while having historic overtones, was elevated to new heights by the Khomeini regime. Highlighted by stepped-up political rhetoric as well as the acquisition and testing of Chinese built Silkworm anti-shipping missiles, the Khomeini regime³⁹ made no secret of its desire to dominate the region. The vision of an Iraqi defeat and fanatic Iranian revolutionary armed forces sweeping south through the Arabian Peninsula, served to galvanize the GCC states in their efforts to prevent an Iranian victory. Due to its strategic location, vis-a-vis the Strait of Hormuz, the Khomeini regime long maintained the view of Iran "as having predominate responsibility for security in both the Strait of Hormuz and

38

Ibid., p. 7.

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The Silkworm anti-shipping missile is the export version of the Chinese (Peoples Republic) Hai Ying-2 (HY-2) coast defense missile system and is a derivative of the Soviet SS-N-2 STYX anti-ship missile. The HY-2 has three variants: radar homing, radar homing with a radar altimeter, and an infra-red homing version. The HY-2G employs an active radar homing system in the I-Band frequency range with a relatively large antenna and a radio altimeter enabling it to achieve a narrow tracking beam-width and a cruising altitude of 30 meters and a terminal attack altitude of 15 meters. The HY-2A is an infra-red version not of the "imaging" type. The war-head weight is 450kg and the missile has an effective range of 20-95km thereby making it the ideal anti-shipping weapon to be

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the Gulf as a whole." The right of other Persian Gulf states to seek security assistance from outside powers has been adamantly denied by Iran.

The Soviet Union seeks to establish and then strengthen its influence with states in the region while eroding U.S. influence in the Gulf with the ultimate objective of replacing the United States as the superpower protector of

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the region. The Soviets have attempted to offer a security framework to the Gulf states that would guarantee "the uninterrupted flow of Persian Gulf oil without the less attractive political side effects that would accompany a

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Western alliance." While the Soviets have not overtly threatened the flow of oil, they have close ties to those countries "that sit astride the oil sea lanes of communication (SLOC's) -- the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), Ethiopia, Libya, and Afghanistan." 43

deployed near the Strait of Hormuz. By late 1988, Iran was thought to have acquired the follow-on to the HY-2, the C801, which is postulated to be employable in both ship-launched and coastal defense roles. For more information see: Jane's Weapons Systems 1988-89, Jane's Information Group, Surrey, U.K., p. 160.

40
The Weinberger Report, p. 8.

41
Snyder, p. 108.

42
Ibid.

43
Ibid.

However, the Soviet position in the region is also complicated by a series of conflicting interests brought about by the Iran-Iraq war:

The Soviets seek to maintain their position as the champion of Iraq and are concerned about the consequences of an Iranian victory in the Gulf War. . . . However, the Soviets also seek to avoid alienating Iran and, if possible, hope to improve their relationship. In practice, therefore, the Soviets have sought to play both sides of the war, staking out ostensibly constructive positions calling for the wars end, while thus far deflecting strong action directed against Iran as the recalcitrant party towards a settlement.⁴⁴

Based on their experience in Afghanistan, the Soviets would "not take lightly a decision to invade Iran, a country with twice the area and three times the population of Afghanistan, and with equally difficult terrain."⁴⁵

Likewise, the damage to recent Soviet political and diplomatic objectives throughout the world would be severe and serve as a disincentive to invasion. However, the potential for Soviet intervention in Iran could dramatically increase if the recent Soviet internal political and economic reform initiatives fail resulting in widespread domestic turmoil. Couple this with Soviet Armenian and Azerbaijani ethnic tension escalating out of control and a

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The Weinberger Report, pp. 8-9.

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U.S. Dept. of Defense, Annual Report to the Congress (Washington: 1990), p. 25.

collapse of central authority in Tehran causing in turn a request for Soviet assistance from one of the competing factions, and the probability of Soviet intervention is significantly enhanced. Without a unified internal resistance movement and external military assistance, Iran, in all likelihood, could not prevent a Soviet push to the vital coastal areas.

46

Ibid.

CHAPTER III

THE CRISIS

Iran under the great leadership of the Shah is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world. This is a great tribute to you, Your Majesty, and to your leadership, and to the respect, admiration and love which your people give to you.¹

Jimmy Carter
New Year's Eve Toast,
Tehran, December 31, 1977

Background

Within weeks of President Carter's toast to the Shah, Iran plunged into a year-long series of violent antiregime demonstrations which culminated in the overthrow of the Shah and the establishment of a theocratic revolutionary regime in February of 1979. Such pronouncements illustrate not only the failure of the United States to recognize significant shifts in Iranian domestic politics but clearly demonstrates the volatility of an area of the world steeped in 3,000 years of Persian cultural and religious traditions suddenly exposed to superheated rates of economic and political change.

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James A. Bill, The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 233.

In the months following the Revolution, Iran moved to isolate itself from the Great Power struggle in the region -- first from the United States as a result of the 444 day hostage crisis of 1979-81 and then from the Soviet Union by the clergy's ruthless and violent suppression of the Communist Tudeh Party and the breaking of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1983. This period of the "Twin Great Satans" is without precedent in Iranian history as Iran, from the age of Russian expansion in the eighteenth century, has always acted to balance the Great Powers against one another. Iran's move to isolate itself from the Great Power struggle ironically encouraged Great Power cooperation in terms of the United States' concern over access to vital oil supplies and the Soviet Union's concern over the spread of Islamic fundamentalism as an element of disorder in Soviet Azerbaijan and Armenia. Likewise, Iran's move toward isolationism coupled with the threat posed by a spill-over from the Iran-Iraq War caused regional actors to coalesce against the hegemonic desires of Iran as manifested in the establishment of the GCC. Other manifestations of this spill-over from the war of attrition on the Iran-Iraq border included the Gulf "Tanker War" and the "War of the Cities" with the former posing a serious threat to neutral² interests in the region.

Iraq's military strategy shifted in 1984 to an all-out effort to strangle Iran's economic capacity to wage war by using its air superiority to attack and destroy Iran's oil producing facilities and exporting terminals. In an attempt to cripple Iraq's economy,³ Iran's only choice of a counter-strategy was to attack the shipping of Iraq's gulf allies by "indiscriminately laying minefields in international and neutral waters and by attacking neutral shipping throughout the Persian Gulf in the best Barbary corsair tradition."⁴ However, in the summer of 1986, it became clear that significant changes were taking place in the Persian Gulf. Intelligence reports provided evidence the Iranian's had acquired and were preparing to deploy Chinese-built Silkworm anti-shipping missiles in the Strait of Hormuz.⁵ During this time frame, there was "an equally significant change in the organization and nature of the [Iranian] combat forces . . . the introduction of the

³ Early in the war, Iran had destroyed Iraq's ability to export or import by sea. Consequently, no shipping -- neutral or belligerent -- were serving Iraqi ports. For an analysis of the war strategies of Iran and Iraq see: David Segal, "The Iran-Iraq War: A Military Analysis," Foreign Affairs, vol. 66, No. 5, Summer 1988, p. 946.

⁴ Segal, p. 961.

⁵ The Weinberger Report, p. 15.

Revolutionary Guard as a threat to shipping in the Gulf." ⁶

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Navy . . . emerged as a new, unpredictable and more daring element during 1987. Whereas most "regular navy" strikes have occurred at night off the UAE Coast, the Revolutionary Guard, using high speed patrol craft, ventured further into the Gulf for both day and night attacks.⁷

Persian Gulf shipping attacks by both Iraq and Iran increased steadily throughout 1987 with over 60% of the attacks taking place in the last four months of the year (after the 6 week U.N. sponsored cease-fire was broken in ⁸ late August) (see Table 4). Interestingly, Iranian oil exports were 40% higher than the previous year despite Iraqi ⁹ interdiction efforts.

The first 6 months of 1987 witnessed ships bound for Kuwaiti ports becoming the primary targets of Iranian attacks. After the Iranian inspired riots in Mecca in August, Iranian attacks began to include ships involved in

⁶ Crist Statement, p. 93.

⁷ Ibid., p. 94.

⁸ Ibid., p. 93.

⁹ Ibid.

TABLE 4

ATTACKS ON SHIPS IN THE PERSIAN GULF BY BELLIGERENT, 1987

Attacker	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Tot.
Iraq	6	8	5	7	5	2	3	4	12	13	8	15	88
Iran	6	3	4	4	10	5	4	5	16	7	10	17	91
Total	12	11	9	11	15	7	7	9	28	20	18	32	179

SOURCE: The New York Times, 10 January 1988, p. E3. (From Center for Defense Information)
Proceedings, May 1989.

trade with Saudi Arabia. In September, the Iranians began firing Silkworm missiles from the occupied Fao Peninsula against ships inside Kuwaiti territorial waters. Coupled with these attacks were a series of unexplained but highly suspicious mining incidents which had begun in mid-May 1987. The detection and subsequent sinking of the Iranian mine laying ship the Iran Ajr on 21 September "laid to rest the question of whose 'invisible hands' were seeding the mines."

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Some accounts of the riots in Mecca maintain that the incidents were not inspired by Iran. One account claims that "the angry masses" actually acted in violation of Khomeini's specific instructions and rioted in Mecca. According to the "Khomeyni Message to Hajj Pilgrims, Part III" contained in FBIS-NESA of 3 August, 1987, Khomeini urged that "the respected clergy, managers, and officials of the convoy's and pilgrimage must make every effort to ensure that the Hajj [pilgrimage] ceremonies will be conducted in a correct and orderly manner." For more information on the Iranian side of the story see: R.K. Ramazani, "The Iran-Iraq War and the Persian Gulf Crisis," Current History, February 1988, p. 64.

11 On 3 September, 1987, Iran conducted it's first Silkworm attack against Kuwait. The missile, fired from the Fao Peninsula, traveled close to 60 miles and impacted within three kilometers of the huge \$5 billion Al Ahmadi refinery. The missile flew 8 miles further than the published range suggesting Iran had made modifications to the Silkworms fuel capacity. On 15 October, the Iranians fired another Silkworm from the Fao Peninsula and hit a U.S. owned, Liberian registered tanker at the Ahmadi terminal. For more information see: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, War in the Persian Gulf: The U.S. Takes Sides, a Staff Report (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., November 1987), p. 26. Hereafter referred to as: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Staff Report.

12

Crist Statement, p. 96.

Reflagging

In an effort to meet the formidable challenges posed to U.S. interests in the region by this spillover from the Iran-Iraq War and Iran's quest for hegemony, the United States developed a "two-track policy -- on the diplomatic front to end the war and on the strategic front to protect our interests in the interim while the war rages."¹³ One fundamental aspect of U.S. policy was an all-out effort to end the war. Because of Iraq's willingness to negotiate and Iran's "intransigence," U.S. efforts focused on ways to step-up the international pressure on Iran.¹⁴ Since 1981, Iran had rejected all attempts by the international community to negotiate a comprehensive settlement to the war. U.S. diplomatic efforts to end the war centered on several U.N. Security Council resolutions and through efforts like "Operation Staunch" to end the flow of arms to Iran.¹⁵ In order to promote regional stability, the United States continued a policy of military assistance and arms

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Schloesser, p. 40.

14

Ibid., p. 43.

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Operation Staunch was a unilateral diplomatic effort by the Reagan Administration to stop the flow of arms to Iran. The goal of the operation was to limit Iran's ability to purchase weapons, ammunition, and other equipment which could be converted to military use thereby persuading Iran to end the war. The sources of Iran's military supplies and equipment were tremendous: Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, Switzerland, West Germany, Sweden, South Korea, North Korea,

sales to key regional allies in the hope of deterring a spillover from the war and reduce the possibility of using U.S. forces to prevent such a spillover. Specifically, because of Iranian intimidation of Kuwait and Kuwaiti shipping and Soviet efforts to expand its influence in the region, the United States deemed it necessary to be "responsive to Kuwaiti requests for protective naval support" (see Table 5).

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The government of Kuwait raised the issue of "securing outside assistance" at a GCC. summit meeting in November of 1986. The first indication of Kuwait's new approach to protect its interests came in December of 1986 when the Kuwaiti Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) queried the U.S. Coast

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Norway, Belgium, Argentina, Japan, China, the Eastern European countries, and others. The credibility of Operation Staunch was seriously undermined by the Iran-Contra Affair which revealed that the United States was secretly selling arms to Iran. While generally endorsing Operation Staunch, critics argued that it should have been enhanced by stronger and bilateral measures. Specifically, they claim that China should have been singled out (in the form of retaliation) by withholding the transfer of technology in response to the selling of Chinese Silkworm missiles to Iran. For more information see: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, National Security Policy Implications of United States Operations in the Persian Gulf, Report (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print Off., 1987), pp. 71-72. Hereafter referred to as: House Committee on Armed Services Report.

16

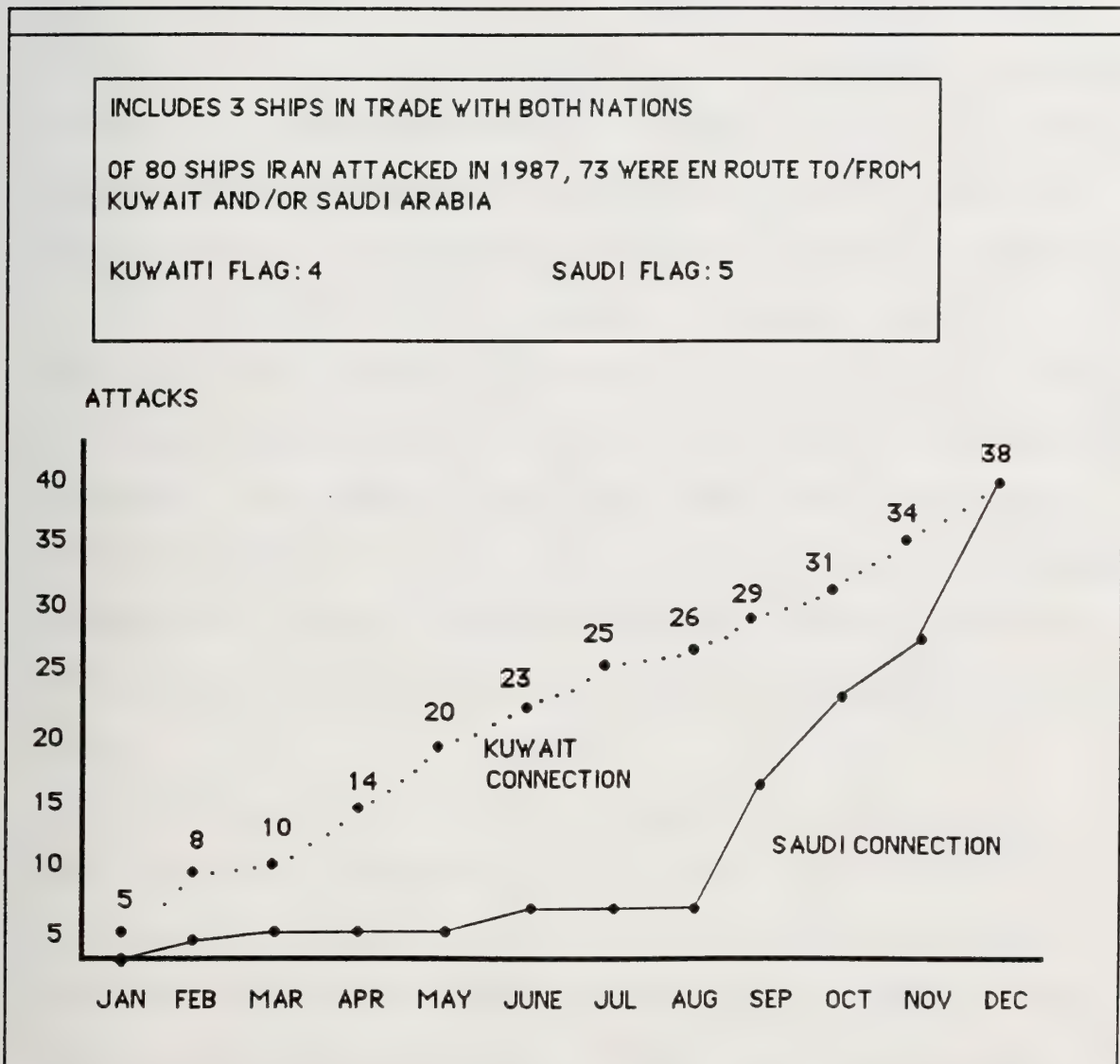
Crist Statement, p. 97.

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The Weinberger Report, p. 13.

TABLE 5

1987 IRANIAN ATTACKS ON KUWAITI AND SAUDI TRADE



SOURCE: General George B. Crist, U.S.M.C., "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, Status of the United States Central Command, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 22 February 1988).

Guard on reflagging requirements. And in January 1987, "the government of Kuwait formerly queried our embassy about the use of U.S. flags and whether reflagged Kuwaiti vessels would receive U.S. Navy protection equal to that provided by other U.S. flagged vessels."¹⁸ Kuwait also informed the United States of an agreement with the Soviet Union to provide similar reflagging protection for Kuwaiti tankers or to charter Soviet ships. Kuwait's original plan of reflagging six tankers under the U.S. flag and five tankers under the Soviet flag was revised when the U.S. government, on March 7th, announced that all eleven Kuwaiti tankers would be protected under the U.S. flag. Kuwait did however augment its tanker fleet by chartering three "long-haul" Soviet flag vessels through a one year commercial charter¹⁹ lease.

Following several more months of discussion and indecision on the reflagging proposal, the United States announced in early May that the protection of shipping plan was about to be implemented. However, on 17 May an Iraqi fighter aircraft mistakenly attacked the U.S.S. Stark (FFG-31) with two Exocet air-to-surface missiles killing 37 crew members and severely damaging the ship. This tragic event

¹⁸
Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁹
Ibid.

combined with Congress' position that it had not been adequately informed of the reflagging plan, forced a delay in implementing the plan until late July.

Protection of Shipping Mission

After President Reagan formally approved the reflagging plan on 29 May, 1987, the USCENTCOM was assigned the challenging mission of protecting U.S. flagged vessels transiting the Persian Gulf.²⁰ The primary mission of U.S. forces in the Gulf:

. . . has been and will continue to be to provide military presence in order to protect U.S. interests and provide a rapid response capability in contingencies. Other missions include assisting friendly regional states, protecting U.S. flagged vessels, maintaining safe passage of U.S. flagged shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, and preserving U.S. and allied access to vital oil resources in the region.²¹

The specific mission of protecting the 11 reflagged Kuwaiti tankers required additional naval combatants be assigned to the U.S. Middle East Force and the stationing of a Carrier Battle Group (CVBG) in the North Arabian Sea to serve as a deterrent to the threat posed by the introduction of the Silkworm missile as well as Iranian F-4 Phantom aircraft positioned in the vicinity of the Strait of Hormuz. A

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Crist Statement, p. 96.

21

The Weinberger Report, p. 15.

Battleship Surface Action Group (BBSAG) also joined the CVBG to augment the contingency forces in the North Arabian Sea. This initial increase in force structure signaled the beginning of a protection of shipping plan that was continually adjusted and fine-tuned (in terms of force structure, operating procedures, and command and control) as the threat evolved with the introduction by the Iranians of mine warfare, Silkworm missiles, and small boat attacks. ²²

Military Arrangements

In a report to Congress of 15 June, 1987 regarding U.S. security arrangements in the Persian Gulf, former Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger outlined the military arrangements which would be implemented to support the protection of shipping plan. Noting that U.S. warships have escorted U.S.-flag vessels (4 to 10 ships per month) for the past four years with no attack on these ships by either belligerent nor any other neutral vessel while in close proximity to a U.S. warship, the report shares with Congress the fundamental elements of U.S. policy, the nature of the U.S. naval presence, and the evolution of events that have led to the protection of shipping plan.

The report outlines the belligerent (Iran and Iraq) order of battle and assesses the threat to U.S. forces and U.S. flagged shipping as well as the threat to Kuwait and

other GCC states. The report stresses that Iran is "reluctant to deliberately and overtly target U.S. forces" and "the Iranian threat to U.S. forces is primarily based on potential identification errors or a unilateral decision by a local commander."²³ The most likely Iranian threat is described as an act of terrorism and other unconventional, non-attributable forms of attack. The report does not specifically mention the threat posed to U.S. forces by Iranian mines.

Since the Iranian government views Kuwait as an "active ally" of Iraq, the threat to Kuwait's oil facilities, desalinization plants, and shipping was rated as moderate-to-high either from raids by the Iranian Air Force or by sabotage.²⁴ Similar attacks or threats of attack could be carried out against other GCC states. In short, for these reasons:

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The Weinberger Report, p. 16.

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An apparent act of sabotage took place at Kuwait's Al Ahmadi refinery on 22 May, 1987. The manager of the refinery told the members of a Congressional Investigation Committee that a ruptured pipeline connected to a huge liquid petroleum gas (LPG) tank had caught fire after the pipe had been tampered with. According to the manager, "That incident came within a whisker of a major catastrophe. If we had not contained the fire, and the LPG tank had exploded this entire plant, all the neighboring communities to the north and south would have been vaporized." For additional information see: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Staff Report, p. 26.

It is considered unlikely that Iran would seek a direct confrontation with the United States by directly or overtly attacking a U.S. flag merchant ship. This is particularly true if the merchant ship is escorted by U.S. warships. A deliberate strike on U.S. forces by Iraq is highly unlikely, and accidental attacks such as that suffered by the U.S.S. Stark are far less likely to occur due to procedures being developed for interaction between U.S. and Iraqi forces.²⁵

The report also outlined U.S. peacetime Rules of Engagement (ROE) noting they were based on the inherent right of self-defense. The Persian Gulf Supplemental ROE were tailored to provide specific guidance for threats from aircraft, surface ships (including Boghammer gunboats) and land-based Silkworm anti-shipping missiles. The following definitions formed the basis of the ROE:

- Hostile intent: The threat of imminent use of force against friendly forces, for instance, any aircraft or surface ship that maneuvers into a position where it could fire a missile, drop a bomb, or use gunfire on a ship is demonstrating evidence of hostile intent. Also, a radar lock-on to a ship from any weapons system fire control radar that can guide missiles or gunfire is demonstrating hostile intent. This includes lock-on by land-based missile systems that use radar.

- Hostile act: A hostile act occurs whenever an aircraft, ship, or land-based weapon system actually launches a missile, shoots a gun, or drops a bomb toward a ship.

U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf will respond as follows:

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The Weinberger Report, p. 17.

- Self-defense: U.S. ships or aircraft are authorized to defend themselves against an air or surface threat whenever hostile intent or a hostile act occurs.

- U.S.-flagged commercial vessels: U.S. ships or aircraft may defend U.S.-flagged commercial vessels against air or surface threats whenever hostile intent or a hostile act occurs.²⁶

The ROE authorized the on-scene commander to declare a threat hostile and engage that threat with the necessary force required to defend his unit or U.S. flagged vessels. Any force beyond that which is required to neutralize the immediate threat or in response to a specific hostile act must be approved by the National Command Authority (NCA). Likewise, the combat readiness of U.S. warships operating inside the Gulf will normally remain at Condition III (see Table 6). However, when confronted by an air or surface contact which behaves in a threatening manner or when transiting the Strait of Hormuz, ships were required to be at General Quarters stations.²⁷

To successfully conduct the protection of shipping plan, U.S. naval forces were augmented with additional combatants equipped with surface-to-air missile systems (SAMS) and PHALANX close-in-weapons systems (CIWS). Saudi

²⁶

Ibid.

²⁷

Ibid., p. 18.

TABLE 6

READINESS CONDITIONS OF U.S. NAVAL COMBATANTS

U.S. Naval vessels have five readiness conditions. These conditions represent varying states of readiness and are depicted as follows:

CONDITION I. Condition I, or General Quarters, requires the manning of all weapons systems, sensors, damage control, and engineering stations. Engineering systems are configured for maximum flexibility and survivability. With all hands at General Quarters, the ship is prepared to fight at its maximum capability.

CONDITION II. Temporary relaxation of Condition I for rest and meals at battle stations.

CONDITION III. Condition III watches require about one-third of the crew to man the weapons systems for prolonged periods. Condition III must provide the capability to conduct or repel an urgent attack while the ship is called to General Quarters.

CONDITION IV. Condition IV watches require an adequate number of qualified personnel for the safe and efficient operation of the ship and permit the best economy of personnel assignment to watches. No weapon batteries are manned.

CONDITION V. In port during peacetime, no weapons manned.

SOURCE: Secretary of Defense Report (Weinberger Report) to the Congress on Security Arrangements in the Persian Gulf (15 June, 1987).

Arabian-based E-3A (AWACS) aircraft were also integrated into the plan to enhance its effectiveness. The report notes an operational plan was developed employing a "sphere of influence" for small groups of vessels under escort by U.S. warships and further states that "our warships are adequately armed and are guided by the appropriate rules of engagement to meet the threat, including that from Silkworm²⁸ missiles." Escorted merchant ships were to be in direct communication with and have moderate separation from U.S. Navy warships. The escorting warships were required to conduct electronic surveillance while other U.S. Navy ships remained on patrol elsewhere in the Gulf. These additional ships were available to assist the escorting ships if required. While the report assesses the risk from unconventional attack as low-to-moderate, it stresses the presence of U.S. Navy warships would serve as a "powerful²⁹ deterrent to an Iranian attack."

The military arrangements section of the report is summarized by an assurance to Congress that the United States was vigorously seeking an end to the Iran-Iraq War through all diplomatic channels which would ensure the territorial integrity and sovereignty of each belligerent. Additionally, the United States welcomed the active support

²⁸
Ibid., p. 23.

²⁹
Ibid., p. 24.

for the protection of shipping plan from both allies and regional friends but was prepared to accept the superpower responsibility of taking the initiative in ensuring the free transit of shipping and oil:

The bottom line: If we as the leader of the free world, do not take on the role of protecting declared vital U.S. and Western interests, there are others who will try to insert themselves -- gladly. Their objectives will not be ours. That is the real risk we cannot afford to take.³⁰

Implementation

The first "Earnest Will" convoy escort mission took place on 22 July, 1987, and continued uneventfully from the Gulf of Oman and into the Persian Gulf until the evening of 24 July when the tanker Bridgeton struck a mine off Farsi Island in the northern Persian Gulf shipping lanes. The discovery of mine fields in the Al Ahamdi channel off Kuwait in June and off Oman in August, required an increased emphasis on mine countermeasures.³¹ Minesweeping helicopters were airlifted to the U.S. naval base at Diego Garcia and loaded onboard an amphibious assault ship, the U.S.S. Guadalcanal (LPH-7), bound for the Persian Gulf. Several "in-theatre" boats were modified for minesweeping missions but proved ineffective in open water operations.

³⁰

Ibid., p. 24.

³¹

Crist Statement, p. 99.

By late October, these boats were replaced by Aggressive class oceangoing minesweepers and in November, U.S.

minesweeping operations were augmented by an allied task
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force. A combined British, Netherlands, and Belgian task force patrolled the waters in the vicinity of Abu Musa Island and the Western Strait of Hormuz. An Italian force conducted minesweeping operations along the tanker escort route south of Abu Musa Island while the French Navy conducted operations off the United Arab Emirates Coast and
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the Fujairah and Khor Fakkan anchorages.

As the mine threat increased, Iran intensified its attacks on neutral (and unescorted) shipping with Swedish-built Boghammer fast-attack boats and reportedly perfected the art of concentrating their fire on the crew compartments

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Joachen Hippler, "NATO Goes to the Persian Gulf," Middle East Report, Nov.-Dec. 1988, p. 18.

33

Crist Statement, p. 100. The Royal Navy's ARMILLA Patrol had been in the Persian Gulf since 1980 providing protection for British merchant shipping. In September of 1987, four additional MCM ships arrived in the Gulf to augment the ARMILLA patrol. MCM ships from the European navies coordinated their mine clearing operations under the auspices of the Western European Union (WEU) (see Chapter VII). However, there was very close cooperation between the British, Dutch, and Belgian MCM forces which culminated in the formation of an integrated MCM force code-named CALENDAR (named in memory of the joint Anglo-Dutch-Belgian operation to clear the Scheldt Estuary of mines in 1944-45). From October of 1988 through January of 1989, CALENDAR ships joined forces with the other WEU navies and conducted operation CLEANSWEEP to clear a shipping lane 2,000 yards wide and 300 miles into the Gulf from the Strait of Hormuz. For more information see: United Kingdom Statement on the Defence Estimates (London: HMSO, 1989).

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of these ships. U.S. special purpose helicopters, river patrol boats, and MK III patrol boats were deployed throughout the Gulf to counter this new and intensifying threat. Support for these forces was provided by an amphibious dock landing ship (LSD) and several mobile sea bases stationed in the northern Persian Gulf. These bases were to "provide a continuous presence along the transit route, thereby making new mining operations and small boat attacks against shipping far more difficult."³⁵ Additionally, U.S. special operations forces were stationed in the area to "give the on-scene commander the flexibility to match response to the threat."³⁶

Responsibility for command and control of these forces had been limited to the small staff of the Commander, Middle East Force (COMMIDEASTFOR) deployed inside the Persian Gulf and the CVBG in the North Arabian Sea with the chain-of-command "split" between USCINCPAC and USCINCENT.³⁷ As the threat changed and the escort operations intensified, it became apparent that a new command and control structure,

34
Ronald O'Rourke, "The Tanker War," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1988, p. 31.

35
Crist Statement, p. 97.

36
Ibid., p. 98.

37
Ibid.

reflecting this intensification and complexity, was required:

For these reasons a single headquarters under the direction of United States Central Command - Joint Task Force Middle East - was established in September to more efficiently plan, coordinate, and direct overall joint operations in the Persian Gulf region. The Commander, Joint Task Force Middle East controls all the U.S. forces involved with escort operations. These forces include the Carrier Battle Group, Battleship Battle Group, Middle East Forces, Mine Warfare Forces, Air Force assets, and Army Forces in the Persian Gulf region.³⁸

By the end of 1987 these improvements in force structure and command and control had contributed to the successful completion of 22 transits involving 60 ships in and out of the Gulf.

Escalation

In late September of 1987, after a brief hiatus, both Iraq and Iran resumed the tanker war. Iraq continued to use missile-armed attack aircraft against ships near Kharg Island, in the vicinity of Sirri and Lavan Islands and eventually as far south as Larak Island near the Strait of Hormuz as a part of its strategy while Iran intensified its use of mine warfare in waters close to Kuwait, in the shipping channels west of Farsi Island and eventually into

38

Ibid., p. 99.

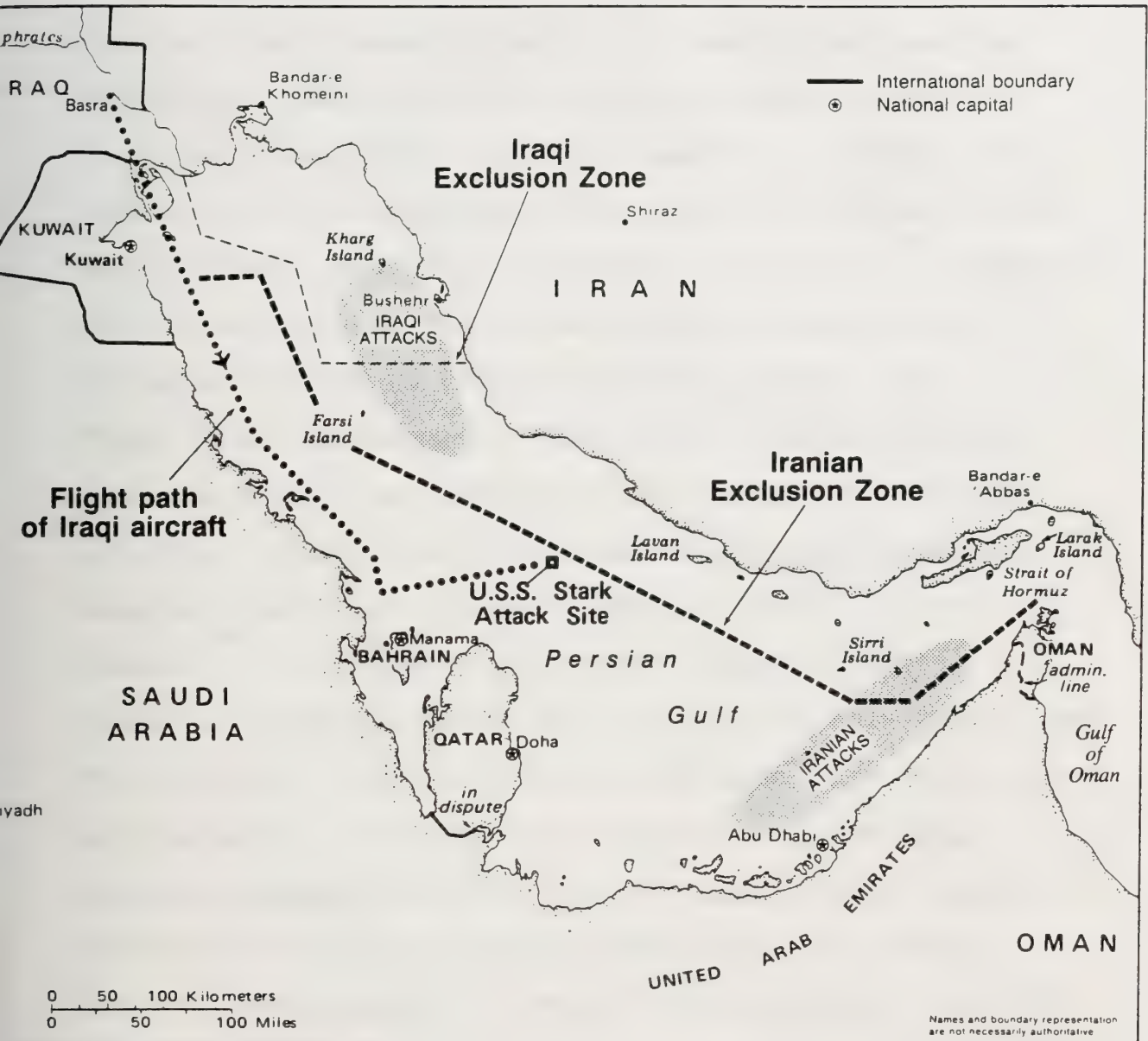
the Gulf of Oman. (see Table 7)

On 21 September, the U.S. Navy captured, then destroyed an Iranian mine laying ship caught in the act of laying mines. On 7 October as tensions in the Gulf increased, U.S. forces sank three Iranian Boghammer gunboats that had fired on U.S. helicopters. On 16 October, Iran fired a Silkworm anti-shipping missile from the Fao Peninsula and hit and damaged the reflagged tanker Sea Isle City inside Kuwaiti territorial waters. The United States retaliated for the missile attack on the Sea Isle City three days later by destroying two Iranian oil platforms in the Rostam oil field near Bahrain. And on 22 October, Iran again fired Silkworm missiles from the Fao Peninsula but this time the threat was ⁴⁰ Kuwait's primary offshore oil facility. As tensions mounted, the GCC states announced in late-October that an attack on one would be considered an attack on all and appropriate collective self-defense measures would be implemented if such an attack took place.

In an unprecedented development, Soviet warships began escorting Soviet-flagged vessels leased to Kuwait. Interestingly, these Soviet-flagged vessels were not immune

TABLE 7

PERSIAN GULF MAP: SHIP ATTACKS AND EXCLUSION ZONES



SOURCE: U.S. Dept. of State, "U.S. Policy in the Persian Gulf," Special Report No. 166, July 1987, p. 4.

from Iranian attack as they sustained damage in two separate mining and gunboat attacks.⁴¹ In an attempt to placate both Iran and Iraq, these incidents were played down and the Soviet Navy took no retaliatory action against Iran.

The first months of 1988 witnessed a continued rise in Persian Gulf tensions even though the United States scaled back its naval presence in February to 29 ships.⁴² Iranian strikes in the Gulf tanker war in January and February indicated a shift in tactics away from larger, hard to damage crude carriers and toward more vulnerable refined products such as gas liquids or petrochemical carriers. According to some analysts, these strikes appeared more damaging suggesting the use of more effective incendiary weapons.⁴³ On 6 March, U.S. forces fired on Iranian gunboats attempting to engage a U.S. Navy supply barge. The following day, U.S. helicopters came under fire from gunners on Iranian oil platforms. And on 14 April, the U.S.S. Samuel B. Roberts (FFG-58) struck a mine 55 miles northeast of Qatar having just completed the year's 25th escort mission. The Roberts had escorted the reflagged liquified

⁴¹ O'Rourke, p. 30.

⁴² Towell, p. 1057.

⁴³ "Product Tanker Attacks May Signal Gulf War Shift," Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, 1 February 1988, p. 7.

44

gas carrier Gas King through the Gulf to Kuwait. While over one hundred tankers had been damaged by mines, missiles, and gunfire throughout the long Iran-Iraq War, this was the first time a U.S. vessel had been hit and damaged by a mine (see Table 8).

The Reagan Administration ordered U.S. military forces in the region to step-up plans and preparations for a possible retaliatory strike against Iran for resuming its mine-laying operations in international waters. Press reports indicated the retaliatory plan "was a possible limited military attack coupled with a stern warning from the U.S. government that any further mining by Iran would bring harsher military reprisals."⁴⁵

Mines recovered from the area by U.S. naval units clearly indicated an Iranian connection. The serial numbers matched the production line of the type of mines captured from the Iranian landing craft Iran Ayr in September 1987. Additionally, the mine's casings remained free of any sea growth clearly indicating that the mine field had been recently sown. Acting on this evidence, President Reagan,

44

Molly Moore, "U.S. Warship Damaged by Gulf Blast," The Washington Post, April 15, 1988, p. 1.

45 George C. Wilson, "U.S. Forces Intensify Gulf Plans," The Washington Post, April 18, 1988, p. 1.

TABLE 8

ATTACKS ON SHIPS IN THE PERSIAN GULF BY TYPE OF WEAPON USED

Type of Weapon	1984	1985	1986	1987	Total
Missile/Rocket/ Grenade	20	37	63	67	187
Mine	2	0	0	8	10
Gunfire	1	1	1	11	14
Other/Unknown	14	12	20	83	129
Total	37	50	84	169	340

SOURCE: Same as for Table 2.

in full consultation with the senior leadership of Congress, ordered U.S. naval forces, in a "measured" response, to destroy three Iranian gas oil separation platforms (GOSP's) and one Iranian warship. Accordingly, U.S. ships destroyed the Sassan and Sirri GOSP's with naval gunfire and explosive charges after warning the Iranian crew to evacuate the platforms. After two Iranian F-4 Phantom aircraft that had approached U.S. naval units in the vicinity of the Sirri platform were chased off by surface-to-air missiles, the U.S.S. Wainright (CG-28) and the U.S.S. Simpson (FFG-56) destroyed the Joshan, an Iranian guided missile patrol boat, with missiles and naval gunfire. After learning that armed Iranian Boghammer speedboats were attacking United Arab Emirates owned oil platforms in the Mubarak oil fields and a U.S. flagged supply tug, the Willie Tide, President Reagan personally authorized an attack on these boats by U.S.S. Enterprise (CVN-65) based A-6E Intruder aircraft. At least one Boghammer was sunk, several severely damaged, and the remainder fled at high speed back to the Iranian
46
Revolutionary Guard base on Abu Musa Island.

Later that afternoon, an A-6E aircraft, conducting a low fly-by to obtain a visual identification on a suspected Iranian warship, was fired on by the British-built SAAM class Iranian frigate Sahand, which had just sortied from

the Iranian naval base at Bandar Abbas in reaction to the U.S. retaliatory strikes. As soon as the on-scene commander declared the ship hostile, carrier based A-6E and A-7E aircraft along with the U.S.S. Joseph Strauss (DDG-16) sank the Sahand in a coordinated missile and laser-guided bomb attack. Shortly thereafter, a second SAAM class frigate, the Sabalan, also fired on an A-6E conducting a visual identification check. The aircraft returned fire with a single laser-guided bomb effectively crippling the ship. Secretary of Defense Frank C. Carlucci called off the attack on the Sabalan before additional firepower could be brought to bear.⁴⁷ Ironically, while U.S. naval forces were engaging Iranian forces in the southern Persian Gulf, Iraqi forces successfully dislodged the Iranian occupation of the Fao Peninsula near the strategic Shatt-Al-Arab waterway in the northern Persian Gulf. This incident was the last major confrontation between Iran and the United States prior to the 3 July incident in which the U.S.S. Vincennes (CG-49) mistakenly shot down an Iranian commercial A-300 airbus

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For a first-hand account of Operation Praying Mantis as told by the operational commanders on the scene see: Bud Langston and Don Bringle, "Operation Praying Mantis - The Air View" and J.B. Perkins, III, "Operation Praying Mantis - The Surface View," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1989, pp. 54-70.

enroute from Bandar Abbas to Dubai while over the Strait of
48
Hormuz.

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For detailed information on the accidental downing of Iran Air 655 see: Department of Defense, "Investigation Report: Formal Investigation into the Downing of Iran Air Flight 655 on 3 July 1988 and U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Investigation into the Downing of an Iranian Airliner by the U.S.S. "Vincennes." Hearing. (Washington: U.S. Gov't. Print. Off., 8 September 1988). See also: Norman Friedman, "The Vincennes Incident," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1989, pp. 72-79; and, U.S. Dept. of State, Iran Air 655: Steps to Avert Further Tragedies, Current Policy Document No. 1092 (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1988).

CHAPTER IV

ENDS VERSUS MEANS: THE CONCEPTS

'Cheshire puss,' she began rather timidly. . . .
'would you tell me please, which way I ought to
go from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you want to
get to,' said the cat.¹

Lewis Carroll
Alice in Wonderland

The Objective

The combat between U.S. and Iranian forces in the Persian Gulf on 18 April, 1988, was the largest naval battle fought since the end of World War II. Immediately after the fog of battle had lifted and the result of the U.S. Navy's superb performance became clear, a myriad of questions surfaced as to the relationship between our stated political objectives and the military means (role of force) used in attempting to achieve those objectives. The elemental concept that a clear sense of purpose must form the basis of all plans of action has been the cornerstone of strategic thought for over 2,500 years. The Cheshire Cat notwithstanding, strategists from Sun Tzu to Carl von Clausewitz and as recently as Caspar Weinberger have all made it abundantly clear that the relationship between

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Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland; as quoted in: John M. Collins, Grand Strategy: Principles and Practices (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1973), p. 1.

military and political objectives is central to the decision to commit combat forces into a given situation.

Weinberger's six major tests for the use of U.S. combat forces reflects a continuation of the age old attempt to rationalize the political context within which military force is applied (see Table 9). The establishment of a clearly defined relationship between political objectives and military means is central to Weinberger's six tests. Interestingly, his analysis appears heavily influenced by many of Clausewitz's dictums regarding this political-military relationship. For example, Clausewitz's admonition that "the political object is a goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose," is clearly reflected in Weinberger's² third test. This test is also firmly stamped with the imprint of Clausewitz's dictum regarding war plans:

No one starts a war - or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so - without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by the war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose; the latter its operational objective.³

Likewise, Clausewitz's warning that "the original political objectives can greatly alter during the course of the war and may finally change entirely since they are influenced by

²
von Clausewitz, p. 81.

³
Ibid., p. 579.

events and their probable consequences" is strictly adhered to and forms the basis of the fourth test.⁴ While no one is claiming the United States was fighting a war against Iran in the Persian Gulf, this strategic thought process -- the ability to see relationships between objectives and capabilities, ends and means, aspirations and interests, and short-term and long-term priorities -- as conceptualized by these latter-day (albeit dead) strategists, provides valuable insight for current policymakers as to the proper application of force in pursuit of political goals. As a recent study clearly points out:

Prior to any future commitment of U.S. military forces, our military leaders must insist that the civilian leadership provide tangible, obtainable political goals. The political objective cannot merely be a platitude, but must be stated in concrete terms. While such objectives may very well change during the course of the war, it is essential that we begin with an understanding of where we intend to go.⁵

The Issues

Critics of the Administration's policy in the Persian Gulf maintained that the plan to reflag 11 Kuwaiti tankers was not placed in a comprehensive strategic context. The protection of shipping plan, they contend, was apparently

4

Ibid., p. 92.

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Harry G. Summers Jr., On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War (Navato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), p. 185.

TABLE 9

SECDEF'S SIX MAJOR TESTS FOR USE OF U.S. COMBAT FORCES

1. The United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies.
2. If we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly and with the clear intention of winning. If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, we should not commit them at all.
3. If we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And we should have and send the forces needed to do just that.
4. The relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed -- their size, composition and disposition -- must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary. Conditions and objectives invariably change during the course of a conflict. When they do change, then so must our combat requirements.
5. Before the United States commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. This support cannot be achieved unless we are candid in making clear the threats we face; the support cannot be sustained without continuing and close consultation.
6. The commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort.

SOURCE: Excerpt from speech of Honorable Caspar W. Weinberger to the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., 28 November 1984.

made in a vacuum, without a clear, coherent and consistent strategy for protecting vital U.S. interests in the region. The debate within the decision-making process that led to the placement of combat forces in the Persian Gulf in the summer of 1987 failed to answer the vital question of "What are we trying to accomplish with the use of military force?" In short, the critics argued that the confusion over the proper definition of the objective manifested itself in the administration's allowance of available options to remain limited to two unattractive alternatives: reflag and protect Kuwaiti tankers or abandon the U.S.'s (already public) commitment to Kuwait and suffer loss of credibility in the Arab world.

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The strategic objective of containing then ending the Iran-Iraq War had two ancillary objectives -- first, ending the ground war which Iraq initiated and Iran insisted on pursuing and secondly, ending the tanker war against

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For a detailed discussion of the opposing views on the Reagan Administration's reflagging and Persian Gulf policy see: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Response to the Weinberger Report Concerning the Administration's Security Arrangements in the Persian Gulf, Report (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1987); U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Persian Gulf: Report to the Majority Leader United States Senate from Senator John Glenn and Senator John Warner on their Trip to the Persian Gulf May 27 to June 4, 1987 (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 17 June 1987); and U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, War in the Persian Gulf: The U.S. Takes Sides, A Staff Report (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., November 1987).

shipping in the Gulf for which Iraq was responsible. The objective of ending the ground war was shared by the United States, Iraq, the GCC states (including Kuwait), and to some extent by the Soviet Union. Conversely, the United States and Iran shared the common objective of ending the tanker war. Critics argued that U.S. policy must distinguish⁷ between these "shared and divergent objectives." When viewed from this perspective, protection of Kuwaiti tankers they argue, does not make sense as the strategic interests of the United States would be enhanced by an end to the tanker war. In short, by protecting a key Iraqi ally, the United States is promoting a continuation of the war at sea and reducing the "downside risks for the principle aggressor⁸ (Iraq) in the tanker war to continue its attacks." Additionally, by protecting Kuwaiti tankers, the United States squarely confronts Iran "with whom it shares the objective of keeping the Gulf open for the free flow of⁹ oil." Therefore, these critics argue that:

⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Response to the Weinberger Report Concerning the Administration's Security Arrangements in the Persian Gulf, Report, (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print Off., 1987); as contained in 26 I.L.M., September 1987, pp. 1469-1470. Hereafter referred to as The Nunn Report.

⁸ The Nunn Report, p. 1470.

⁹ Ibid.

The only plausible reason for protecting Kuwaiti tankers and, thereby, encouraging further ship attacks by Iraq is the possibility that these events would influence the Iranians to end the ground war. But the Administration has produced no witnesses and no evidence that there will be any effect on the ground war or that this is even a purpose of the move. Thus, the United States proposes to play an expanded military role which is counter to one objective (ending the 'tanker war') and which will not be effective in attaining the second (ending the ground war). The United States is about to repeat the same mistake it made in Lebanon: U.S. military forces are to be employed in a symbolic mission without clear and attainable military objectives.¹⁰

In short, Iran's attacks on Gulf shipping is a retaliatory response which would probably stop if Iraq ceased its attacks in the Gulf as Iran depends heavily on its own Gulf shipping to fuel the war effort. The U.S. naval forces poised against Iran are, "in effect,¹¹ hostage to Iraqi war policy."

Critics of the administration's policy in the Persian Gulf also maintained that the protection of shipping plan placed too much emphasis on protecting interests (access to oil, security of moderate Arab states, limiting Soviet influence) which were not being substantially threatened at the time. Given the huge volume of shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz (350-400 ships per month) and the

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Ibid.

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Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Staff Report, p. 43.

limited number of attacks (less than one percent of Gulf shipping has been disrupted) it becomes readily "apparent that the 11 Kuwaiti tankers proposed for reflagging and the relatively insignificant amount of oil they may carry are not the real issues."¹² The real issues are:

First, the strategic interests of the U.S. (and the industrialized West) in an area that holds 50-60 percent of the worlds' known petroleum reserves and second, the threat posed to that interest by the Iran-Iraq War. The "Tanker War" per se, does not significantly threaten that interest -- few oil tankers have been sunk and the price of oil has actually decreased since the tanker war began (March 1984).¹³

These critics also maintain that Iran exports more oil than Kuwait and the "U.S. has not expressed concern about the free flow of Iranian oil."¹⁴ They also charge that it is difficult to justify the protection of shipping plan when the United States is indirectly protecting the interests of Iraq who initiated the tanker war and who has carried out over 70% of the shipping attacks, including many on U.S.

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U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Persian Gulf: Report to the Majority Leader United States Senate from Senator John Glenn and Senator John Warner on Their Trip to the Persian Gulf May 27-June 4, 1987 (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print Off., 17 June 1987), p. 16. Hereafter referred to as The Glenn-Warner Trip Report.

13

Ibid.

14

The Nunn Report, p. 1467.

allied tankers.

Some have taken the argument a step further by claiming the overall concept for the defense of the Gulf oil fields and transit routes borders on "strategic absurdity":

The original determination of "vital interest" for a commodity of some economic value -- but of marginal strategic criticality -- has established a momentum which places virtually all options in the hands of the potential opponent. The U.S. has created an inadequate force of substantial cost to deploy as a sacrificial player in the narrow hope of dissuading an aggressor from seizing a prize he probably has little need for -- and which has little more than comfort and standard-of-living value to the West. . . . The planning for defense of the Persian Gulf is an example of severe disharmony between national policy and military strategy. There is simply no rational way the latter can live up to the former.¹⁶

Likewise, critics argue that the Administration's preoccupation with U.S.-Soviet competition in the region as a zero-sum game detracts from a more balanced and regional approach to Gulf security. The internal domestic, political, economic, religious and cultural factors of the regional states that tend to play against the Soviet Union are not factored into the strategic equation. Soviet fear of regional hegemony by a fanatical and fundamentalist Iran coupled with internal ethnic tension in Soviet Armenia and

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Ibid.

16

Edward B. Atkeson, "The Persian Gulf: Still a Vital Interest?," Armed Forces Journal International, April 1987, p. 56.

Azerbaijan is not taken into account when developing security strategy for the Persian Gulf:

Possibilities for Soviet gains in the region are severely limited by ingrained Arab suspicions of Soviet power and purpose. Indeed, the only potential Soviet advance may lie in its emerging rapprochement with Iran -- a development, ironically, being encouraged by current U.S. policy.¹⁷

While generally supportive of the administration's military arrangements, some critics maintained that the lack of landbased air cover, threats against non-military targets, and lack of burden sharing arrangements with Europe and Japan would combine to severely inhibit the conduct of the protection of shipping plan. A foreboding statement from a Senate Armed Services Committee Report of 29 June, 1987, raised another issue critical to the success of the plan:

That being the threat from naval mines. Mine warfare would be an indirect form of attack that Iran might favor. U.S. mine countermeasures capabilities are severely limited. As a consequence, the United States must be prepared well in advance to counter any mine threat.¹⁸ (Emphasis added)

In summary, the tactic of protecting Kuwaiti ships, critics argue, was not placed in a comprehensive strategic context. The relationship between Kuwaiti tanker protection

¹⁷

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Staff Report, p. 43.

¹⁸

The Nunn Report, p. 1474.

and U.S. strategic objectives (ending the Iran-Iraq War and keeping Iran intact as a buffer state against Soviet hegemony) was not properly factored into the strategic equation. The primary reason for U.S. involvement in the region -- the objective of limiting Soviet influence -- was based on the false assumption that the threat of Soviet hegemony in the Gulf was imminent. By making a public commitment to Kuwait, inserting forces, then debating the strategy all without Congressional support, the administration put itself in the "untenable position of implementing a military policy which lacked strategic purpose and which is unlikely, should hostilities erupt, to receive sustained support from the Congress and the American people."¹⁹ Other policy options should have been developed, without "directly or abruptly abandoning the commitment to Kuwait" for a course of action that accounts for the²⁰ achievement of the overall strategic objective.

The Role of Force

The political context within which military force is applied has long been a source of controversy often leading to bitter debate, confusion of policy, a paralysis of forces, and ultimately an embarrassment or outright failure to achieve political and military objectives.

¹⁹

Ibid., p. 1476.

²⁰

Ibid.

It has long been recognized that the use of force is not an end in itself but a means by which states pursue political objectives. What has not been clear, particularly in recent years, is an agreement on how force is to be applied within this political context. As mentioned previously, this lack of consensus is dramatically illustrated by the long-standing institutional differences between intragovernmental agencies in the political-military decision-making arena in Washington, D.C. A recent study²¹ concluded that a "dysfunction" exists between civilian and military thinking on the use of force in "this confused, semipolitical, semimilitary era of violent peace."²² Civilian planners prefer to work from a series of options that provide maximum flexibility and a low risk of failure. They tend to view the instruments of war as a means to send diplomatic signals to potential adversaries (and friends). This is accomplished by establishing a military presence, coercing, or conducting "surgical strikes" to demonstrate American prestige and influence throughout the world.²³

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Bremment, p. 27.

²²

James H. Webb Jr., "An Appropriate Use of Force," Naval War College Review, Winter 1988, p. 26.

²³

Summers, U.S. News & World Report, p. 27.

Conversely, military planners prefer to deal with concrete objectives as early as possible to properly plan and execute military operations. To the military planner, the purpose of force is to prevail, not to send subtle diplomatic signals. U.S. military capability is viewed "less as a scalpel than as a battle-ax" designed and intended to increase an adversary's perception that the foreign policy of the United States is backed up by a potent force structure with the political will and resolve to use those means when vital national interests are at stake.²⁴ Add to this lack of consensus on the role of force, a changing Third World order-of-battle that includes sophisticated precision-guided weapons and a lack of sufficient U.S. forces to cover all contingencies, and the result is quite often less effective than what policymakers had anticipated.²⁵

In Force Without War, U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument, Blechman and Kaplan define the political use of armed forces as occurring when:

²⁴
Ibid.

²⁵
Ibid.

Physical actions are taken by one or more components of the uniformed military services as a part of a deliberate attempt by the national authorities to influence, or to be prepared to influence, specific behavior of individuals in another nation without engaging in a continuing contest of violence.²⁶

The key to this concept lies in the policymakers recognition that objectives are to be achieved through the effect the force has on the perceptions of the adversary.²⁷ This conceptual framework also relates very closely to John Cable's definition of gunboat diplomacy:

Gunboat diplomacy is the use or threat of limited naval force, otherwise than as an act of war, in order to secure advantage, or to avert loss, either in the furtherance of an international dispute or else against foreign nationals within the territory or the jurisdiction of their own state.²⁸

Both concepts stress the limited and calculated use of force, short of all-out war, to obtain political objectives by reinforcing or modifying the behavior of individual leaders within a target state.

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Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1978), p. 12.

27

Ibid., p. 13.

28

James Cable, Gunboat Diplomacy 1919-1979: Political Applications of Limited Naval Force (London: The MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1981), p. 39.

In their study, Blechman and Kaplan conclude that when the nature of relations between two countries is hostile, military force is normally used as an instrument of coercive diplomacy. In this case, force is used "to deter the target from an undesired action or from stopping a desired action; or to compel the target to do or to stop doing

²⁹ something." Likewise, force may also be used to support a non-antagonist in one of two ways: "to assure a second target that it will continue to do or not do something; or to induce a second target to do or stop doing something." ³⁰

Regardless of the mode, the authors note that force can be applied either directly to a specific target or indirectly to intermediaries. When placed in a naval context, these terms relate very closely to Cable's definitions of expressive, catalytic, purposeful, and definitive uses of force and Edward Luttwak's use of the terms latent and ³¹ active suasion.

It should be noted that these studies indicate the nature of U.S. objectives appears to be an important factor in whether or not the use of force for political ends is successful. The use of military force to

²⁹ Blechman and Kaplan, p. 71.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Edward N. Luttwak, The Political Uses of Sea Power (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), pp. 11-38.

achieve political objectives is most successful when U.S.
objectives were complementary with prior U.S. policies.³²

These same studies show that the use of force in a coercive role for political purposes can be used to compel an adversary to change its behavior or to maintain or reinforce an established behavior. Additionally, the use of force has been most successful when the U.S. objective is to reinforce the behavior of a specific state rather than modify that behavior.³³

As Blechman and Kaplan point out, the literature of coercive diplomacy has devoted much less attention to assurance and inducement than it has to deterrence and compulsion. The most straightforward and strikingly candid treatment of coercive diplomacy can be found in Thomas Schelling's Arms and Influence. In this seminal study,

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Blechman and Kaplan, p. 525.

33

Ibid, p. 107. For additional information on the objectives and goals of force see: Robert J. Art, "The Role of Military Power in International Relations," in Trout and Harf, eds., National Security Affairs (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1982), pp. 13-53; Glenn H. Snyder, "The Conditions of Stability," in R.J. Art and K.N. Waltz, eds., The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics (New York: University Press of America, 1983), pp. 64-74; Robert E. Osgood, "The Expansion of Force," in The Use of Force, pp. 75-100; Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," World Politics, Vol. 30, No. 2, January 1978, pp. 167-214; and Clause Knorr, The Power of Nations (New York: Basic Books, 1975), especially chapters 1 and 5.

Schelling draws a clear distinction between diplomacy and force: Diplomacy is bargaining -- it seeks outcomes that, though not ideal for either party, are better for both than some of the possible alternatives. The key to successful bargaining (whether it is polite or impolite, constructive or aggressive, respectful or vicious) is the presence of some common interest between the antagonist as well as an awareness of the requirement to make the adversary prefer³⁴ an outcome favorable to oneself.

Force, on the other hand, provides the means by which a country may not need to bargain: "Some things a country wants it can take, and some things it has it can keep, by sheer strength, skill, and ingenuity."³⁵ Where Schelling departs from traditional Western military strategy is in the less military and less heroic aspects of the role force plays in achieving political objectives:

In addition to seizing and holding, disarming and confining, penetrating and obstructing, and all that, military force can be used to hurt. In addition to taking and protecting things of value it can destroy value. In addition to weakening an enemy militarily it can cause an enemy plain suffering.³⁶

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Schelling, "The Diplomacy of Violence," in R.J. Art and K.N. Waltz, eds., The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics (New York: University Press of America, 1988), p. 3. This article was reprinted from Schelling's Arms and Influence.

35

Ibid.

36

Ibid., p. 4.

To exploit this capacity for hurting and inflicting damage, Schelling contends that one needs to know precisely what an adversary values and what frightens him. Just as important, the adversary must be made to clearly understand what type of behavior of his will cause the violence to be inflicted and what will cause it to be withheld.³⁷

Additionally, coercion by threat of damage and inflicting pain requires that "our interests and our opponent's not be absolutely opposed."³⁸ In short, coercion requires finding a bargain and "arranging for him [the adversary] to be better off doing what we want -- worse off not only doing what we want -- when he takes the threatened penalty into account."³⁹

Schelling maintains that suffering requires a victim that can feel pain and has something to lose. However, to inflict pain and suffering gains nothing in and by itself -- it can only make people behave to avoid it:

The only purpose, unless sport or revenge, must be to influence somebody's behavior, to coerce his decision or choice. To be coercive, violence has to be anticipated. And it has to be avoidable by accommodation. The power to hurt is bargaining power.

37
Ibid., p. 5.

38
Ibid.

39
Ibid.

To exploit it is diplomacy -- vicious diplomacy, but diplomacy.⁴⁰

Schelling concludes his treatment of coercive diplomacy with a reminder that the power to hurt is nothing new in the long history of warfare. What disturbs Schelling, however, is how extraordinary it is that most treatises on war and strategy "have declined to recognize that the power to hurt has been throughout history, a fundamental character of military force and fundamental to the diplomacy based on it."⁴¹

The theoretical literature, as Blechman and Kaplan note, has long recognized the importance of credibility for bargaining in crisis situations: "Anyone who has played

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Ibid., p. 4.

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Ibid., p. 24. For additional discussion on the concept of coercive diplomacy see: James F. Cable, Gunboat Diplomacy (London: Praeger for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1971); Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); Paul G. Lauren, "Ultimata and Coercive Diplomacy," International Studies Quarterly, vol. 16 (June 1972), pp. 131-65; Edward N. Luttwak, The Political Use of Seapower, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); Bruce M. Russett, "The Calculus of Deterrence," Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 7 (June 1963), pp. 97-109; Thomas C. Schelling, Arms and Influence (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); J. David Singer, "Inter-Nation Influence: A Formal Model," American Political Science Review, vol. 57 (June 1963), pp. 420-30; Oran R. Young, The Politics of Force: Bargaining During International Crises (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, Conflict Among Nations (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), especially Chapter III on crisis bargaining; Craig and George, Force and Statecraft (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), chapters 14-15.

poker seriously can attest to the importance of a player's reputation when it comes to having threats taken seriously."⁴² As the analysts point out, armed forces, when used against a backdrop that includes a demonstrated willingness to act, may in fact be quite effective. In other words, the existence of a solid reputation for action in a particular region of the world may lead an adversary to be more cautious and more willing to retreat in the face of insurmountable odds.⁴³

However, the obverse of this dictum is also true: in regions of the world where the U.S. reputation for resolve was absent, adversaries have been much more "confident in testing the degree of U.S. commitment and more willing to risk action in opposition to American interests."⁴⁴ As demonstrated later in this study (Chapter V), the Persian Gulf region provides a unique laboratory for the testing of the latter proposition.⁴⁵

⁴² Blechman and Kaplan, p. 111.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid. For additional information on the importance of credibility for bargaining in a crisis situation see: Fred C. Ikle, How Nations Negotiate (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp. 74-86; Oran R. Young, The Politics of Force: Bargaining During International Crises (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 35-36; Robert Jervis, The Logic of Images in International Relations (Princeton: Princeton

Since the United States chose to adopt a deterrent and reactive strategy in the Persian Gulf, a brief word is in order on the theory of deterrence and defense. Glenn Snyder aptly defines deterrence as a means of discouraging the enemy from taking military action by "posing for him a prospect of cost and risk outweighing his prospective

⁴⁶ gain." Defense, on the other hand, is defined as a means to reduce one's own prospective costs and risks in the event deterrence fails:

Deterrence works on the enemy's intentions; the deterrent value of military forces is their effect in reducing the likelihood of enemy military moves. Defense reduces the enemy's capability to damage or deprive us; the defense value of military forces is their effect in mitigating the adverse consequences for us of possible enemy moves, whether such consequences are counted as losses of territory or war damage.⁴⁷

Gordon Craig and Alexander George frame the concept in a slightly different manner by defining deterrence as the effort of one actor to persuade an adversary not to take action against his interests by convincing the adversary

University Press, 1970), pp. 78-102; Snyder and Deising, Conflict Among Nations, pp. 185-195; George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice, p. 60; and Craig and George, Force and Statecraft, pp. 172-173.

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Glenn H. Snyder, "Deterrence and Defense," in R.J. Art and K.N. Waltz, eds., The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics (New York: University Press of America, 1983), p. 25.

⁴⁷

Ibid., p. 26.

that the costs and risks of doing so will simply outweigh the prospective gain. According to their formulation, deterrence is based upon the assumption of a "rational" opponent -- "one who can be expected to calculate the utility of his alternative courses of action on the basis of available information."⁴⁸

In formulating a deterrence policy, Craig and George stress the importance of a clear and straightforward step by step approach. For example:

The first step in formulating a deterrence policy is to weigh the interests of one's country that are engaged in the area that may be threatened by hostile action and to assess how important they are. The next step is to formulate and convey to the opponent a commitment to defend those interests. The deterring power backs its commitments by threats to respond if the opponent acts. Such threats must be both credible and sufficiently potent in the eyes of the opponent -- that is, pose a level of costs and risks that he regards as of sufficient magnitude to overcome his motivation to challenge the defending power's position.⁴⁹

As mentioned previously, credibility plays a vital role in the effectiveness of a deterrent strategy. The deterring power must communicate to the adversary that it has the will and resolve to defend its vital interests and it must possess the capabilities necessary, appropriate, and usable for the defense of those interests. In other words, the deterring power must have the ability to deal -- effectively

⁴⁸
Ibid.

⁴⁹
Ibid.

-- with the varying types of action an adversary may take.

And finally, theorists of international relations have proposed that a deterrent strategy, as the one adopted by the United States during the Persian Gulf crisis, is most likely to succeed when a potential adversary is not sure of his ability to control the risks involved in the military action he is contemplating. In short, if that uncertainty exists, then deterrence will probably be effective.

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Ibid.

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Theorists of international relations note that the theory and practice of deterrence exists at three levels: First, the deterrent relationship of the two superpowers at the strategic nuclear level; second, and below the strategic nuclear level, the deterrence of "limited wars" with particular emphasis on the nuclear and conventional forces facing each other in central Europe; and third, the deterrence of "sublimited" conflict at the "low end" of the spectrum of violence. While deterrence of nuclear war at the strategic level has, by far, received the most attention in the deterrence literature, this study focuses on the two lower levels and their application to the Persian Gulf crisis. The reader should be aware that the literature on deterrence theory is quite exhaustive. However, for an excellent overview of the theory and practice of deterrence at all three levels, the reader is referred to the following sources: Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, Deterrence Theory in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974) especially part one on "The Nature of Contemporary Deterrence Theory" and part three "Toward a Reformulation of Deterrence Theory"; Gordon A. Craig and Alexander L. George, Force and Statecraft (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), Chapter 13; Glenn H. Snyder, Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961). For a comprehensive analysis and review of the pertinent literature see: James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. Contending Theories of International Relations (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1989)

Framework for Sizing Naval Forces

In their article "Naval Presence: Sizing the Force," Ralph Arnott and William Gaffney attempt to develop a rational, structured approach to choosing a force in response to a crisis management situation. They note that if forces are not properly chosen there can be a much greater impact on fleet operations than may actually be necessary. The authors define a show of force in the maritime sense as the "specific deployment of naval forces that are planned in pursuit of an identifiable political objective in which the use of force is contemplated or could reasonably be expected to occur if circumstances arise."⁵²

The first step in the force selection process is to identify the true political objective and not necessarily the publicly stated objective. Having clearly defined the objective, the next step in the decision to use force is the identification of whom we are trying to coerce and how we are going to coerce them. The follow-on step must then be a determination of the force structure and an accurate assessment of the costs involved in employing then sustaining that force. These cost assessments must include the impact on other commitments, training, readiness and

particularly Chapter 9 on "Macrocosmic Theories of Conflict: Nuclear Deterrence and Arms Control."

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Ralph Arnott and William Gaffney, "Naval Presence: Sizing the Force," Naval War College Review, March-April 1985, pp. 18-19.

morale as well as the probability of success and the dollar cost. They contend, the global commitments of our naval forces provide little flexibility to respond to crises without affecting other commitments. For example:

. . . when the U.S.S. Ranger battle group was diverted to Central America, this required either extension of the U.S.S. Vinson's battle group deployment or gapping of the Indian Ocean commitment. When the Indian Ocean presence was built up to two CVBGs after the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, naval forces had to be withdrawn from the Mediterranean and Western Pacific to fulfill that new commitment for continued presence. Historically, crisis response show of force requirements have not developed in areas where training support and services are available. Crisis response restricts force mobility and reduces training exercises necessary for unit combat proficiency and integrated force training for general war strategy. The newly emerging Caribbean presence requirements may require the surging of forces during their training cycle which will necessarily result in loss of training and proficiency. The show of force requirements may well justify the loss of training. But it must be understood that should the use of force be required, the reduced combat proficiency of the force could have an overall negative effect.⁵³

As Admiral William J. Crowe Jr., former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), recently pointed out, "Congress and the public expect us to dominate -- to come through unscathed. They won't tolerate big losses fighting a third world country for limited objectives."⁵⁴ In other words, performance, rather than victory or defeat, is often the

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Ibid., pp. 26-27.

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Terry Sheffield, George T. Raach, William E. Pellerin, and Joseph P. Englehardt, "Force in the Persian Gulf: How Can General Purpose Forces be Used to Enhance

key. Additionally, critical to the successful employment of force is an objective assessment of all possible outcomes both successful and otherwise. Perhaps the key in making this assessment lies in the determination that if the outcome will not be satisfactory, "then the objective should be re-examined to determine if it is attainable through the use of military force."⁵⁶

Having defined the concept of the objective, framed the issues, and explored the role force plays in obtaining political objectives, it is now possible to analyze U.S. Persian Gulf policy from the standpoint of both theory and practice. Clausewitz's unique insight into "critical analysis proper" -- the discovery and interpretation of facts, the tracing of effects back to their causes, and the evaluation of the means employed -- provides the generic⁵⁷ model by which to analyze the Persian Gulf crisis. Similarly, Arnott and Gaffney's structured framework for choosing a force in response to a crisis situation is the specific analytical model chosen to organize and evaluate the relationship between the political objectives and military means in the Persian Gulf.

Regional Stability?" Unpublished student research paper, John F. Kennedy School of Government and Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, 1989, p. 79.

⁵⁵ Blechman and Kaplan, p. 7.

⁵⁶ Arnott and Gaffney, p. 28.

⁵⁷ von Clausewitz, p. 156.

CHAPTER V

ENDS VERSUS MEANS: AN ANALYSIS

Open ended commitments with vaguely defined political objectives are sure formulas for embarrassment and failure. We learned that in the Vietnam War.¹

James Webb, October 9, 1987
Secretary of the Navy

Background

The Persian Gulf crisis of July 1987, through December 1988, reminded us once again of the need to establish a sound balance between political objectives and military means. A well-defined and properly articulated strategy provides the military means to guarantee achievement of the nation's political objectives. While the experts differ widely over the viability of the reflagging policy and the jury remains out on how well the overall Persian Gulf policy has fared, some preliminary conclusions can be made based on several indices of success. From an operational perspective, the reflagging and protection of shipping plan can certainly be judged a success. The tenacity, expertise, and innovation demonstrated by the U.S. Navy was a major factor in the high number of successful convoys (see Table 10). No tankers were sunk and only two tankers and one U.S. warship were

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Webb, "National Strategy, the Navy, and the Persian Gulf," p. 43.

damaged throughout the year-and-a-half-long operation. The U.S. Navy's ability to continually adjust to a rapidly changing and sensitive political and military situation inside the Gulf directly contributed to the success of the protection of shipping plan. Similarly, the system of contingency planning remained within doctrinally prescribed frameworks thereby easing the execution of these plans.² Keeping it simple always pays high dividends.

However, when measured by the index of securing Kuwait's oil exports, the decision to reflag the 11 tankers fares less well. Prior to the convoy operation, these 11 tankers carried approximately 30% of Kuwait's oil exports. Due to the complex logistics involved in assembling the three to five tankers and combatants that made up a typical convoy, these same 11 tankers could now carry only 15% of the volume of Kuwait's total oil exports.³ This cost-benefit ratio, when multiplied by the enormous dollar cost in sustaining a substantial U.S. naval presence and coupled with the adverse impact on other U.S. commitments, training, readiness, and morale, forces one to seriously question

² Terry Sheffield, et al., p. 73.

³ Pat Towell, "A Year After Escort Policy Was Launched. . . Jury is Still Out on How Well it Works," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 23 April 1988, p. 1052.

TABLE 10

U.S. NAVY CONVOYS, JULY 1987 - DECEMBER 1988

Month	Number of Convoys Begun	Number of Merchant Ships Escorted
<u>1987</u>		
July	1	2
August	5	13
September	4	9
October	4	8
November	5	16
December	3	11
<u>1988</u>		
January	7	16
February	7	18
March	6	10
April	7	18
May	6	14
June	10	16
July	8	13
August	10	17
September	7	17
October	10	19
November	12	22
December	15	20
Total	127	259

SOURCE: Department of Defense, 17 January 1989. Proceedings, May 1989

whether or not the price tag fits the goods. Likewise, the rationale of ensuring the unimpeded flow of oil to the West loses credibility when less than 1% of Gulf oil shipping had actually been disrupted. Additionally, there has been a heavy and increasing use of pipelines to export Gulf oil. According to a report by the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners, the growing use of pipelines as alternative export routes drastically reduces the number (and size) of tankers required to handle the Mideast output. Additionally,

Reduced tanker requirements due to existing Mideast pipelines already far exceed all the world's inactive crude carriers and account for a fifth or more of the total world tanker surplus.⁵

Ironically, full 4.8 million barrels per day utilization of Saudi Arabia's Petrolina capacity to Yanbu on the Red Sea and Iraq's pipeline through Turkey to Ceyhan on the Mediterranean Sea would further cut tanker requirements by an additional 413 billion ton-miles per year. Five

For an analysis of the opportunity, monetary, and human costs associated with the Persian Gulf operation see: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Stabilization, U.S. Economic and Energy Security Interests in the Persian Gulf, Hearing (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print Off., July 14, 1988). Hereafter referred to as: House Committee on Banking.

"Mideast Pipelines Sharply Reducing Global Tanker Needs," Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, 16 May 1988, pp. 2-3.

Ibid.

new Mideast pipelines are presently under construction which⁷ will significantly increase these figures.

The use of alternative pipeline export routes when coupled with the long-suffering tanker industry, excess production capacity outside the Persian Gulf, and substantial strategic petroleum reserves should be able to handle a complete cut-off of the 6 to 7 million barrels per day transiting through the Strait of Hormuz. These conditions, if not effectively eliminating the Strait of Hormuz as a factor in the unimpeded flow of oil, certainly reduces the criticality of the Strait as a strategic chokepoint of world oil supplies. Military arrangements for protecting these pipelines from sabotage or outright military attack may be a better investment of the U.S. security dollar.

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For more information on these five new pipelines see: John Cranfield, "Seeking Alternative Export Routes," Petroleum Economist: The International Energy Journal, May 1988, pp. 151-153 and "Iran and Iraq: Planning for Reconstruction," Petroleum Economist: The International Energy Journal, October 1988, pp. 326-327. See also: "Payment in Oil for Iraq-Saudi Line Spawns Crude Deals," Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, 28 September 1987, p. 1; "Iran Also Planning Ambitious New Oil Export Outlets," Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, 14 September 1987, p. 1; "Iraq's New Pipeline is Making Rest of OPEC Nervous," Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, 13 July 1987, pp. 1-2; "Kuwait Looking to Possible Oil Pipeline Link With Red Sea," Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, 19 January 1987, p. 5; "Mideast Pipelines Sharply Reducing Global Tanker Needs," Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, 16 May 1988, pp. 2-3; "Pipeline Strategies: Saudi Arabia and Iran," Middle East Economic Digest, 20-26 February, 1988, p. 29.

On the positive side, there is evidence to suggest that the U.S. strategic objectives of reinforcing our waning influence with the moderate GCC states and limiting Soviet regional influence have been at least partially achieved. U.S. and allied presence in the region and staying power throughout the operation demonstrated to the GCC states that the United States could be counted on to remain a reliable partner. This demonstration of resolve was particularly successful in light of inconsistent past performances and revelation of the embarrassing Iran-Contra arms deal. By respecting regional concerns in an area with a long history of great power interference, the United States bolstered its image as a responsible superpower in the eyes of the regional governments.⁸ This is particularly relevant when taking into account the political reality of the GCC states having to live with historically dominant Iran after the convoy operations were completed and the U.S. presence reduced.

While Soviet overtures toward Kuwait and U.S. preoccupation with East-West competition in the region as a zero-sum game provided the impetus for the reflagging decision, it remains difficult to assess the extent to which Soviet influence in the region has been limited. It is equally difficult to make this assessment in light of the

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Terry Sheffield, et al., p. 70.

recent Soviet diplomatic inroads in the region -- the opening of embassies in 1985 in Oman, the UAE, and Qatar, with the "major prize," Saudi Arabia, rumored to follow⁹ shortly. However, traditional religious and cultural impediments to such an influence certainly exist in the politically sophisticated ruling families of the Gulf oil sheikdoms. The opportunities for Soviet encroachment in the region remain severely handicapped by long-standing local suspicions of the purpose of Soviet (previously "Russian") expansionism and overtures toward the region.

Ironically, U.S. policy may in fact be encouraging a Soviet-Iranian rapprochement as evidenced by Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's February 1989 visit to Tehran and the reciprocal visit to Moscow by then Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, Hashemi Rafsanjani, in June of 1989. By playing the Soviet card in reacting to the U.S. naval build-up and perceived U.S. intervention in the tanker war, Iran was, predictably, keeping entirely within the historical context of its foreign policy in relation to the superpowers. Iran's foreign policy of na sharg na gharb (neither East nor West) "does not preclude a little tilting

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Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, USN, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Seapower, Strategic, and critical materials, Intelligence, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print Off., 22 February 1989), p. 46. Hereafter referred to as: Brooks Statement.

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to either side if it serves Iranian interests." For example, when the Western nations imposed economic sanctions on Iran as a result of the 1979-81 hostage crisis, Teheran's relations with the Soviet Union warmed up temporarily only to wane again with the violent suppression of the Tudeh Party in 1983 and Iran's continued intransigence in the Iran-Iraq War. However, as the U.S. naval presence in the Gulf began to increase, the Soviet-Iranian rapprochement gained momentum as evidenced by the signing of a joint economic cooperation protocol designed to reinstate the Soviet-Iranian Permanent Commission for Joint Economic

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This foreign policy doctrine is comparable to the concept of non-alignment advocated by many Third World countries since the end of World War II. However, Khomeini's concept of "neither East nor West" envisions an independent and non-aligned policy requiring confrontation with the superpowers on political, economic, ideological, and if challenged, military levels. According to Khomeini, the policies of the superpowers are "diametrically opposed to the interests of the Third World in general, and the Islamic countries in particular," thereby making conflict between Iran and the superpowers inevitable. This doctrine views the superpowers as the mustakbarin (the oppressors) and the Islamic Republic as the mostazafin (the oppressed and exploited). Moreover, the superpowers are "illegitimate players in the international system" because they seek to dominate rather than work within that system. To remedy this injustice, the doctrine calls for an alternative and more just world order established along Islamic lines. For more information on Iran's foreign policy doctrine see: Nader Entessar, "Superpowers and Persian Gulf Security: The Iranian Perspective," Third World Quarterly, October 1988, pp. 1439-1441.

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Ramazani, p. 64.

Cooperation after a six year hiatus. Additional agreements have recently been signed allowing for more than a third of Iran's oil to be exported through the Soviet Union by converting an existing natural gas pipeline (IGAT-1) running between southern Iranian oil fields and the Soviet Port of Baku on the Caspian Sea. Iran and the Soviet Union have also agreed to construct another natural gas pipeline (IGAT-2) which would transport gas from the Kangan Field in southern Iran to Soviet Armenia.¹³ Unfortunately, the recent Rafsanjani diplomatic maneuver may lead to the disturbing possibility of arms transfers from the Soviet Union to Iran -- a possibility raising grave questions as to the viability of U.S. Persian Gulf policy let alone the creation of a geopolitical nightmare for the moderate Gulf states.¹⁴ It is interesting to postulate that if the United States had vigorously pursued alternative methods

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Ibid.

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Entessar, p. 1446; See also: "Iran Planning Ambitious New Oil Export Outlets," Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, September 14, 1987, p. 1.

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According to press reports, Iran and the Soviet Union also concluded a bilateral agreement that included economic cooperation through the end of the century, cooperation in scientific, technological, and nuclear matters, and huge Soviet arms sales to Iran. The agreement also provided for the construction of a new railroad line to link Teheran with Moscow and for exchange visits of religious leaders. For more information see: James D. Hittle, "Atheist Soviets Wooing Iran with Good Dose of Religion," Navy Times, 7 August 1989, p. 23.

of securing Kuwait's oil supplies, Kuwait (and even Iran) may not have played the Soviet card.

On a broader strategic level, initial U.S. policy statements framed the goal of protecting the 11 Kuwaiti tankers in the more expansive context of protecting freedom of navigation in international waters. By protecting Kuwaiti tankers, policy statements indicated that Iran would be deterred from attacking the hundreds of neutral ships that pass through the Gulf each month. How this was to be accomplished was never explicitly stated. Unfortunately, this approach merely signaled to the Iranians that, except for the 11 reflagged Kuwaiti tankers, all other ships were fair game. The fact of the matter remains that both Iraqi and Iranian attacks on Gulf shipping steadily increased throughout the latter half of 1987 and into the first half of 1988 (see Table 3). Quite frankly, these attacks apparently had nothing to do with the U.S. naval presence but were rather a direct result of the dynamics of the Iran-Iraq War. In effect, U.S. naval forces aligned against Iran remained "hostage" to Iraqi war strategy and policy.

When placed at the broadest strategic level, the reflagging policy failed to adequately address the question of how the protection of shipping plan would assist in pressuring Iran and Iraq to end their eight year old war. By protecting Kuwaiti shipping, the United States in effect

reduced the downside risks in Iraq's attempt through the tanker war to strangle Iran's economic capacity to wage war.¹⁵ A closer examination of the subtle yet decisive shift in the balance of power in the war during this timeframe places this issue in its proper context: in war, timing is everything and fortunately for the United States, the decision to retaliate against Iran for the mining attack on the Roberts could not have come at a better time. The dynamics of the Iran-Iraq war began to shift in favor of Iraq in late 1987. Almost bled to death Iran incredibly was planning to launch a major offensive in early 1988 to recapture the strategic Iraqi port city of Basra. The Iranian government had great difficulty in mobilizing volunteers for the offensive and faced with insurmountable Iraqi defenses around Basra decided not to attack. Instead of an offensive along the southern front, Iran made a series of attacks in March of 1988 along its northwestern border with Iraq in the mountainous region of Kurdistan. While these attacks were initially successful, they had little strategic importance. To help repel this offensive, Iraq used chemical weapons and launched a counteroffensive which effectively eliminated the Iranian threat to Iraq's

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For an indepth analysis of Iraq's economic strangulation strategy see: David Segal, Foreign Affairs, p. 958.

hydroelectric complex at Darbandikham, which was believed to
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be the Iranian objective.

While this fighting was taking place, the "War of the Cities" also began to shift in favor of Iraq. Iran was reported to be seriously suffering from constant Iraqi missile attacks on Tehran and Qom while Baghdad was receiving only sporadic Iranian SCUD missile attacks. Iraq reportedly fired over 200 missiles at Iranian cities during this timeframe. Ironically, while the U.S. Navy was pounding Iran's navy and oil platforms on the 18th of April, Iraqi forces recaptured the Fao Peninsula near the strategic Shatt-Al-Arab waterway. As the morale of the Iraqi military began to improve, so did their penchant for
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tanker attacks deeper into the southern Persian Gulf. With the Sirri and Sassan oil platforms, which had been major sources of oil revenue for Iran, now destroyed by U.S. naval forces, the only Iranian oil facility left remaining as a significant source of revenue was the Larak Island floating storage and transshipment terminal in the northern

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Bernard E. Trainor, "The Effect of the Attack: No Shift in Iran's Goals," The New York Times, April 19, 1988, p. 1.

17

Ibid.

Strait of Hormuz. On 15 May, 1988, while flying a U.S. Navy reconnaissance mission over the Strait of Hormuz, the author witnessed the devastating after-effect of a massive Iraqi airstrike on the Larak Island terminal in which two of Iran's biggest storage vessels were destroyed and one shuttle tanker and one of the world's largest crude carriers (a Spanish VLCC) were severely damaged.¹⁹ Iran's oil export strategy of "safety in numbers" and the build-up of its fleet of storage and shuttle tankers gave Iran the capacity to cover its requirements while these damaged ships were repaired or new ones chartered. However, the impunity with which Iraq conducted the strike (use of "iron bombs" and close-in delivery techniques vice stand-off weapons and tactics in Iran's semi-invulnerable southern flank), clearly demonstrated that Iraq's strategy of cutting Iran's economic lifeline was entering a daring new phase. Iraq's signal to Iran seems clear: if the war did not end soon, then Iraq's air superiority would be brought to bear in ever-increasing economic attacks ranging up and down Iran's Persian Gulf littoral eventually forcing an end of the war on terms

The Sirri and Sassan oil platforms accounted for an estimated 8-10% of Iran's total production. For more information see: Ronald O'Rourke, "Gulf Ops," Proceedings, May 1989, p. 42.

"Iran Oil Supplies Are Growing Despite Latest Iraqi Attacks," Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, 23 May 1988, pp. 3-4.

favorable to Iraq. One analyst at the time suggested Iraq should be able to defeat Iran economically "within about 18 months, perhaps sooner if it can maintain the initiative on the ground that it seized in April (1988)."²⁰ Iraq's militarily complex foray deep into the southern Persian Gulf, which required in-flight refueling and a second regional country's support, was simply one more pull on the noose that was growing ever more tightly around Iran's military and economic capacity to wage war. From a psychological perspective, the accidental shootdown on 3 July, 1988, of Iran Air flight 655 by the U.S.S. Vincennes may have been the final strangulating tug on the noose. Within weeks of this tragic incident, Iran finally accepted U.N. Ceasefire Resolution 598 thereby effectively ending one²¹ of the bloodiest wars of the twentieth century.

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Segal, p. 963.

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Admittedly, the causes for the end of the war are varied and complex. However, the accidental shootdown of Iran Air 655 is directly linked to the Iranian decision to accept UNSC 598. The letter of acceptance, from then Iranian President Ali Khamenei to the U.N. Secretary General, clearly states that "the fire of the war which was started by the Iraqi regime on 22 September 1980 through an aggression against the territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran has now gained unprecedented dimensions, bringing other countries into the war and even engulfing innocent civilians." The letter specifically refers to the loss of 290 civilians in the tragedy as "a clear manifestation of this contention" and then declares that Iran, "because of the importance it attaches to saving the lives of human beings and the establishment of justice and international peace and security," accepts the resolution. While the letter links the Airbus incident to the decision

Sizing the Force

The Arnott and Gaffney model of analysis provides a workable framework within which to further analyze the military means used to achieve the political objectives of the year-and-a-half long Persian Gulf operation. As mentioned above, the first step in the force selection process is to identify the true political objective. Having clearly defined the objective, the next step in the decision to use force is the identification of who we are trying to coerce and how we are going to coerce them. Additionally, the selection of forces for a particular mission requires an accurate and realistic assessment of the available time needed for decision making, a choice between the use of committed or uncommitted forces, and a determination of whether those forces are to be used in a dominate or hostage role. Likewise, an assessment of force effectiveness must

to accept the resolution, other factors clearly had an impact on the Iranian government: For example, according to some analysts, Iran's decision resulted from a combination of a series of military defeats in 1987-88, the crippling of the Iranian Navy by U.S. forces, the failure of the Basra offensive and the loss of the Fao Peninsula, Iraqi chemical and missile attacks, effective Iraqi air attacks on the Iranian oil economy, and Iranian fears that continuation of the war would severely threaten the "revolution." In this light, the Iran air incident can be interpreted as the final psychological straw that broke Iran's will to continue the fight. For additional information see: North Atlantic Assembly, Political Committee, General Report on Alliance Political Developments in 1987-88, Arms Control, Bases, the Gulf (Brussels: North Atlantic Assembly International Secretariat, November 1988), pp. 33-35.

be made based on the perceptions of the potential adversary, repercussions in other nations not directly involved, the applicability of the force in obtaining the desired objective, and an accurate threat evaluation. Once the force is selected, it needs to be evaluated as to its sustainability and cost. In other words, when is the probable decision point for its removal or reinforcement? And does the objective justify the overall cost (monetary and opportunity) or would a different force be more cost effective?

Arnott and Gaffney clearly point out that the measure of effectiveness of the use of naval forces in a political role to influence a specific adversary is subjective in nature and "requires thoughtful attention as to the specific²² action the force is to carry out." Likewise, the resort to the actual use of force in a crisis situation demands special consideration, as the primary focus of the military commander will be on the objective to be achieved. For example, if the "performance" of the force has been determined to be more important than the ends achieved, then the military commander must be made aware of this subtle shift in emphasis in order to properly direct the force

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Arnott and Gaffney, p. 27.

commander in his strike planning phase. Finally, the military commander needs to anticipate then analyze all possible outcomes -- both successful and otherwise -- and if it is determined that the outcome will not be desirable, then the political objective needs to be re-evaluated to establish if it can be achieved by military means. Domestic political considerations must also be factored into this equation as the removal, maintenance, or augmentation of forces, while technically correct from a military perspective, may not be advisable due to the political impact at home (see Table 11).

23

The True Political Objective

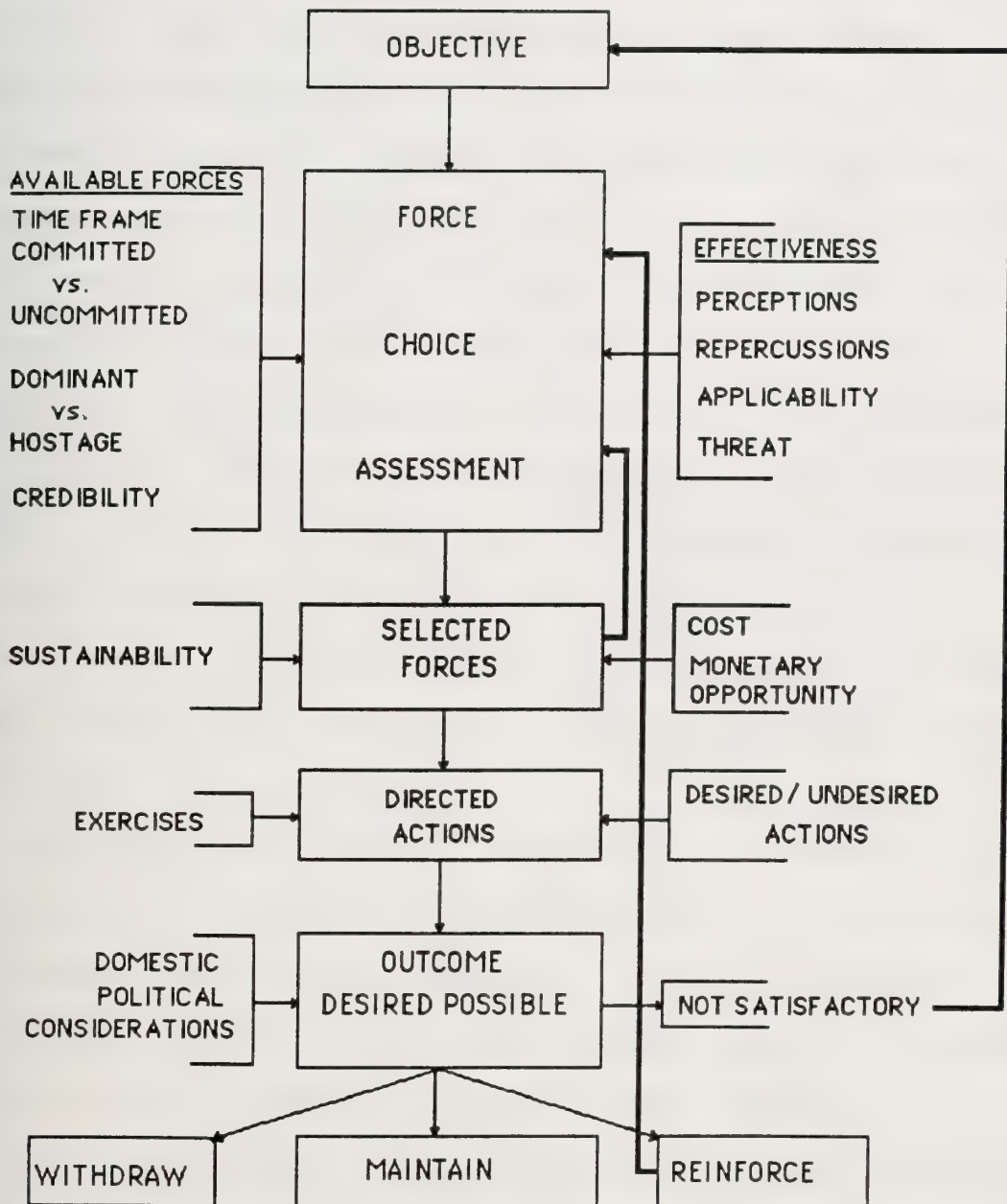
As mentioned above, the specific military operation of escorting and protecting the Kuwaiti tankers can be judged a success. However, when applied to the attainment of the broader strategic goals of ending the Iran-Iraq War and preventing Soviet and Iranian expansionism, the military tactic of protecting the 11 tankers has little relation to these publicly stated political objectives. In order to tailor the force to the specific situation, the identification of the true political objective -- the what -- is required. For example, was the objective of the reflagging plan and the presence of large numbers of U.S.

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Ibid.

TABLE 11

FRAMEWORK FOR SIZING NAVAL FORCES



SOURCE: Ralph Arnott and William Gaffney, "Naval Presence: Sizing the Force," Naval War College Review, March-April, 1985, p. 28.

and allied ships in the Gulf to secure Kuwait's oil supplies, or was the true political objective to prevent the Soviet Union from reflagging the tankers thereby inhibiting Soviet influence in the region? The point of this exercise is that the military commander must know the true political objective in order to properly size the force and take appropriate action. Unfortunately, the confusion over the proper definition of the objective resulted in the allowance of available options to remain limited to two unattractive alternatives: reflag and protect Kuwaiti tankers or abandon the (already public) commitment to Kuwait and suffer the loss of credibility in the Arab world. By going public early, the United States literally boxed itself into a corner with reflagging the only way back into center ring.

Once the true political objective is identified, the next question in need of an answer is, who are we trying to influence: the Iranian government, people, or perhaps a third party such as Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia or even the Soviet Union? A specific answer to this question is essential in that the forces chosen must in some finite way be able to communicate their presence, intentions, and capabilities. Based on the available evidence, it seems safe to conclude that, in terms of the Persian Gulf policy, this question was never properly framed let alone adequately answered. Moreover, the official answer appears to have

been the proverbial multiple choice test response of "all of the above." Unfortunately, such a response only serves to exacerbate the military commander's tactical problem of where to concentrate the full effect of his force.

Force Choice Assessment

If the true political objective was in fact to limit Soviet influence, then perhaps the concentration of U.S. naval force just outside the Gulf in an uncommitted but highly visible posture may have been a more prudent strategy to follow. Blechman and Kaplan note that some strategists argue that because committed forces convey a higher degree of resolve they are more likely to achieve the stated political objectives than uncommitted forces. However, they also point out that opinion is far from unanimous on this point.²⁴ Most analysts agree that committed forces are more vulnerable, difficult to sustain, are in more physical danger, and once in place are much more difficult to remove. If removed prior to attaining their objectives, the political damage can be extensive. On the other hand, uncommitted forces can be easily removed from an area "although history shows a tendency for short-term crises response requirements becoming long-term commitments."²⁵

²⁴ Blechman and Kaplan, p. 529.

²⁵ Arnott and Gaffney, p. 23.

Likewise, the Soviet's ability to concentrate an equally capable naval presence in the region, while an improvement over previous years and capabilities, in no way matches the ability of the United States to deploy and sustain (in a combat ready posture) large numbers of naval units to the region. Some intelligence analysts have gone as far to say that "the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean is modest, extremely vulnerable, and virtually defenseless in time of war" and that it is the Soviet Union rather than the United States that faces the greatest logistical hurdle in getting to the Strait of Hormuz.²⁶ In a recent statement before the Seapower, Strategic, and Critical Materials Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, the Director of Naval Intelligence noted that, as a result of the Gulf War and for the first time, the Soviet Union has "established a more or less permanent naval presence in the Gulf. This presence is not large, generally consisting of one or two warships engaged in convoying Soviet arms transporters to Kuwait . . ."²⁷ At the height of the crisis, the Western naval presence totaled approximately 45

²⁶ Ralph A. Cossa, "America's Interests in the Gulf are Growing, Not Decreasing," Armed Forces Journal International, June 1987, p. 62.

²⁷ Brooks Statement, p. 46.

U.S. and 35 European ships. Most analysts agree that this Soviet naval presence is likely to remain to complement the Soviets increased diplomatic presence regardless of U.S. efforts to limit Soviet influence in the region.²⁹ The approach of concentrating forces outside the Gulf in an uncommitted role would have allowed the uncertainty factor of these forces to act as a force multiplier in the eyes of an adversary while providing additional time with which to simultaneously (and intensely) pursue alternative methods to secure Kuwait's oil supplies. Unfortunately, there exists a common belief in the crisis decision-making process that the time available for responding to the crisis is necessarily short. This common belief manifested itself in the manner in which the United States responded to the Kuwaiti request to reflag once it became apparent the Soviets were involved.

On 10 December, 1987, U.S. Coast Guard headquarters received a telex from the KOTC inquiring as to the feasibility of placing its tankers under the U.S. flag. Ironically, the Coast Guard "thought so little of the idea that it took more than a month, until Jan. 12, just to mail the Kuwaiti's a pamphlet about the regulations and

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procedures involved." The interagency process regarding the reflagging policy grew out of a series of National Security Council meetings in February which had addressed U.S. policy in the Middle East and U.S. posture in the Persian Gulf. However, this slow-moving process was significantly accelerated in early March when the United States learned that the Soviet Union had agreed to reflag five Kuwaiti tankers and that a Soviet delegation was headed to Kuwait to sign the accord on 12 March.³¹ Within five days, U.S. government officials gained President Reagan's approval and formally told Kuwait on 7 March that the United States would reflag all 11 tankers. Interestingly, this rushed decision took place during a period in which White House Chief of Staff Donald T. Regan was fighting to keep his job and the president was recovering from prostate surgery. Some administration officials have openly admitted serious mistakes were made not only in dealing with Congress on the matter but also in a lack of coordination, and sometimes blatant disagreement, between political advisors in the White House and the National Security Council Staff. Former chiefs of staff James A. Baker III, Regan,

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Don Oberdorfer, "Soviet Deal with Kuwait Spurred U.S. Ship Role," The Washington Post, 24 May 1987, p. A.1.

31
Ibid., p. A.21.

and then Howard Baker have all complained of "politically insensitive moves" by the National Security Council staff.³² By the time Howard Baker became Chief of Staff on 2 March, Frank C. Carlucci, the President's National Security Advisor (who had been promoting a new "activist" policy to show renewed U.S. support for the moderate Arab Gulf states following the damaging revelations of the secret arms shipments to Iran) had made all the basic decisions³³ regarding the reflagging policy. Additionally, many questions were raised over why the Administration continued to deal with Congress in such a confrontational manner over serious, difficult, and complex foreign policy issues.³⁴ The traditional bureaucratic politics model notwithstanding, the rush to arrive at a decision, once Soviet involvement was known, may have been premature. As Snyder and Diesing point out, while such crises undoubtedly involve a sense of urgency to formulate policy and make decisions due to the atmosphere of risk and danger, it does not follow that short

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David B. Ottaway and David Hoffman, "Reflagging also Protects Wealth of Kuwait Inc.," The Washington Post, 5 July 1987, p. A.1.

33

Ibid.

34

Ibid.

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decision time is inherent to a crisis. In short,
"identification of the time interval early in the force-
sizing process will allow for a realistic estimate of the
time available for decision making."³⁶

According to Arnott and Gaffney, a dominate force
represets the superior military capability in a particular
region, has the capability to protect itself from any
potential adversary, and is likely to prevail thereby making
the desired political outcome more evident.³⁷ Such a force
is best suited in a case where coercion is required and
behavior modification versus maintaining the status quo is
the plan of the day. Conversely, a hostage force is a
comparatively weaker force that is "interposed between two
or more competing parties to cool a situation. As such it
is dependent upon limited objectives and reasonable rules of
engagement from competing factions for its very
survival."³⁸ If the hostage force is perceived as being
other than neutral or if one or more of the competing
factions wishes to draw the force into the fray, then the

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Glen H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, Conflict Among
Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure
in International Crises (Princeton: Princeton University
Press, 1977), p. 6.

36

Arnott and Gaffney, pp. 22-23.

37

Ibid., p. 24.

38

Ibid.

hostage force has a limited chance of success in achieving the stated political objectives. While the United States certainly enjoyed naval superiority in the region, the essentially neutral mission assigned to those forces (protecting 11 tankers) as well as reacting to rather than controlling the tactical situation as dictated by the peacetime rules of engagement (sweeping mines instead of removing the minelayers) handicapped what could have been a dominate force and relegated it to the position of a hostage force dependent on Iraqi war aims and Iranian restraint to achieve its objectives. By limiting the protection of shipping plan to Kuwaiti tankers the United States, in seeking to lower its great power visibility, simply interposed itself between the two belligerents and shed its neutrality by tilting toward Iraq. This strategy merely encouraged Iraq to continue its economic warfare against Iran and signaled to Teheran that, except for the 11 Kuwaiti tankers, all other merchant shipping in the Gulf was fair game.

On the other hand, there can be little doubt that the presence of escorting U.S. warships and large numbers of carrier-based tactical aircraft in close proximity to the Iranian coastline clearly visible on Iranian radar screens during the Earnest Will convoy operations provided a powerful disincentive to attack the tankers by conventional and attributable means. Any Iranian military commander,

from the regular armed services to the Revolutionary Guards, who is even vaguely aware of the destructive capacity of a section of fully-armed A-6E's let alone an entire carrier airwing, would certainly think twice about attacking a reflagged Kuwaiti tanker or an escorting U.S. warship. However, such a deterrent may not necessarily provide a disincentive to a more unconventional and non-attributable attempt by Iran to disrupt the tankers. While the use of mobile barges, minesweepers, small patrol craft, and attack helicopters were designed to counter this threat, the tactic of continually sweeping mines (and allowing them to be laid again) and reacting to instead of controlling the tactical situation simply served to reinforce Iran's attempt (as in Beirut) to "win the tragedy sweepstakes" by inflicting a desperate however lucky blow to U.S. prestige and morale as the small boat attacks on neutral shipping and indiscriminate minelaying continued. By engaging in a systematic, defensive, and essentially rear-guard operation over an extended period of time and then limiting retaliatory strikes to maritime targets, the United States in effect signaled to Iran that its behavior toward neutral shipping was acceptable as long as a U.S.-owned ship was not overtly attacked. It is a matter of statistical record that, when coupled with the somewhat restrictive ROE's adopted for the convoy operations, this defensive action simply had the effect of increasing the number of ship attacks by Iraq and

Iran on unprotected shipping. In fact, Iran specifically attempted to circumvent U.S. ROE's by firing on a Kuwaiti tanker and a U.S.-owned ship with Silkworm missiles inside Kuwaiti territorial waters -- waters where escorting U.S. warships were not allowed to proceed.³⁹

Additionally, the adoption of this deterrent and reactive strategy signaled Iran that if a U.S.-owned ship was attacked and damaged by non-attributable means, then the United States would assume Iran was responsible and that a measured response directed against an off-shore target was sure to follow. While the naval presence inside the Gulf was at all times linked to the CVBG stationed in the North Arabian Sea, such a deterrent strategy relies on the potential adversary's perception that "an unacceptable level of punishment would occur were he to take hostile

action."⁴⁰ As former Secretary of the Navy James H. Webb, Jr. tersely pointed out, "conducting target practice on a couple of oil platforms was hardly designed to send chills up the spine of the average Iranian sailor, particularly those who make a living laying mines."⁴¹ One of the main factors which must be taken into account when preparing to

³⁹ Childs, p. 513.

⁴⁰ Arnott and Gaffney, p. 24.

⁴¹ Webb, "At Least the Navy Knows What it's Doing in the Gulf," The Washington Post, 20 April 1988, p. A.21.

use military force is the credibility of that force as viewed "through the filters of others' [Iran's] ⁴² perceptions." The choice of a reactive strategy and minimal courses of retaliation served to undermine force credibility and reinforced Iranian perceptions that the U.S. policy of "gunboat diplomacy in the Persian Gulf in support of Iraq's foreign policy objectives" could be defeated by adopting non-attributable means of attack then simply ⁴³ waiting for the Americans to leave. Adoption of such a strategy is forebodingly reminiscent of Clausewitz's warning that:

If the enemy is to be coerced you must put him in a situation that is even more unpleasant than the sacrifice you call on him to make. The hardships of that situation must not of course be merely transient -- at least not in appearance. Otherwise the enemy would not give in but would wait for things to improve.⁴⁴

Fortunately for the United States, the dynamics of the Iran-Iraq War forestalled a lengthy waiting period to an already open-ended commitment. Given the highly successful deterrent effect on Libyan-sponsored terrorism that followed in the wake of the 1986 U.S. bombing raid on Tripoli and

⁴² Luttwak, p. 6.

⁴³ Entessar, p. 1451.

⁴⁴ von Clausewitz, p. 77.

Benina-Bengazi, one cannot help but beg the question why this fresh-in-the-corporate-memory lesson was not reapplied in the Persian Gulf? If such an application of force against Iran's minelaying assets took place after the first overt act of minelaying was discovered in September of 1987, then it remains questionable whether the Roberts would have been damaged at all. As Webb emphatically concludes, it was not until half of the Iranian Navy lay on the bottom of the Persian Gulf that Iran's leaders began to comprehend the power of our military: "Such a lack of comprehension directly affects political machinations, and the administration's leaders are at fault for not having made the Iranians aware sooner."⁴⁵ Theorists of international relations have proposed that a deterrent strategy is most likely to succeed when a potential adversary is not sure of his ability to control the risks involved in the military action he is about to undertake. If that uncertainty⁴⁶ exists, then deterrence will probably be effective. By adopting somewhat predictable and minimal courses of retaliation, the United States simply did not cultivate the required amount of uncertainty in the minds of the Iranian leadership.

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Webb, "At Least the Navy Knows What it's Doing in the Gulf," P. A.21.

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Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 529-530.

The applicability and effectiveness of the forces used in obtaining the desired political objective and its relation to the military threat must also be analyzed prior⁴⁷ to the insertion of those forces into the threat area. Incidentally, the accidental attack on the Stark reignited the 1970's era debate over the "high-low mix" ship structure of the U.S. Navy.⁴⁸ The Persian Gulf experience also appears to have further clouded the distinction between high and low threat areas. For example, the presence of Silkworm and Exocet anti-shipping missiles, fighter/attack aircraft, mines, and lightly-armed Boghammer speedboats all deployed within relatively restricted waters, required warships capable of neutralizing this combination of low and high-technology threats. The deployment of the U.S. Navy's most modern and capable warships, most notably Ticonderoga class guided-missile cruisers, illustrates the seriousness the Navy placed on countering the missile and high performance⁴⁹ aircraft threat. Additionally, the employment of mobile sea barges, attack helicopters, small patrol craft, stinger

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Arnott and Gaffney, p. 25.

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The concept was to deploy the large-deck carriers out of the reach of cruise missiles and replace them with 17,000 ton low-value ships with a compliment of 14 helos and 3 VSTOL aircraft that at the same time had some defensive capability. See E.R. Zumwalt, Jr., On Watch, (New York: The New York Times Book Company, 1976), pp. 75-76.

49

Childs, p. 513.

missiles, small caliber machine guns, and special operational forces (SOF) reflected the unique and creative manner in which the U.S. military chose to deal with the low-tech end of the threat. Given the come as you are nature of modern warfare and, except for the late arrival of the more capable U.S. and allied minesweepers, the modifications made to U.S. equipment and tactics proved quite effective in providing adequate (though static) defense against the threat as evidenced by the high number of successful convoys. However, the attack on the Stark and the Roberts clearly reveal that the threat posed by a small power equipped with a mix of high and low-technology weapons must not only be taken seriously but factored into the force-sizing equation as well.

Selected Forces

Once selected, the force must then be evaluated as to its sustainability. The essential ingredient in evaluating sustainability lies in the elemental strategic concept of identifying the time-frame over which the force is to be sustained. This, quite frankly, was never determined for the Persian Gulf operation. It is rather disingenuous to claim that the force will remain in place

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Arnott and Gaffney, p. 26.

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Ibid.

until all of the political objectives have been achieved when one of those objectives, the end of the Iran-Iraq War (which had been raging for over six years), had no end in sight at the time the decision to reflag was made. Without a clear articulation of when the commitment would end and lacking a standard by which to measure success, such hazily defined objectives of preventing Soviet influence or protecting U.S. interests in international waterways stood little chance of being realized. Even if the time-frame cannot, for political or any other reasons, be readily identified and the commitment must remain open-ended, then the fall-back position must be a determination of how long the force can be sustained and at what point is the decision made for its removal or reinforcement? In other words, at what cost and level of commitment is the point of diminishing return reached? Again, this was apparently⁵² never determined with respect to the Persian Gulf.

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This position is reflected in Secretary Weinberger's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 23 October, 1987 (four months into the operation) in which he attempted to answer a question regarding the point at which the operation would end: "I think basically what would have to happen would be that you would have to get some stability in the Gulf, probably ending the Iran-Iraq War, certainly ending the tanker war . . ." Additionally, this stability would be achieved "when the war ends or when we are able to get such a United Nations resolution [arms embargo] not only passed . . . but enforced." Ironically, unless the United States was politically willing to place direct military pressure on Iran to end the war, achieving the stated criterion for withdrawal -- "stability" in the Gulf -- depended more on the dynamics of the war itself rather than on the U.S. naval presence. For more

There can be little doubt that the United States, through sheer determination and economic might, could sustain a large naval force in the Gulf for months or even years. But does the objective and probability of success justify the cost or would a different force be more cost-effective? In an analysis prepared by the Congressional Research Service for the House Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs, a conclusion was reached that the U.S. Navy could not maintain an indefinite nor expanded presence in the Gulf without incurring severe opportunity, monetary, and human cost setbacks. The opportunity cost of a particular operation is normally measured in terms of other commitments, training, and readiness. One method of determining the opportunity cost in relation to other operational commitments is to examine the required deployment ratio of ships for the Gulf region. The rule of thumb in calculating this ratio is that to maintain one ship in the Gulf, there must be three of the same class in the inventory -- the other two being in transit, training, or upkeep. This ratio may in fact be closer to four to one due to the 12,000 mile long transit of ships from the United States to the Gulf. Additionally, ships deployed to the Gulf were not available for contingencies in other parts

information see: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Policy in the Persian Gulf (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 23 October, 1987), pp. 134-135. Hereafter referred to as: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

of the world and the remaining ships in the fleet had their steaming and training time reduced to compensate for the added cost of maintaining a high profile in the Gulf.⁵³

The report also substantiated that an indefinite commitment or any expansion in the level of U.S. presence in the Gulf would have a cumulative effect on the rest of the fleet. If for example, a requirement for a second CVBG in the North Arabian Sea emerges, "then the strain on the carrier force, which now stands at 14 deployable ships, could become significant unless carrier deployments to other areas were curtailed."⁵⁴ Likewise, if a requirement to expand the number of ships inside the Gulf were to emerge, then those surface ships considered most suitable for Gulf duty -- one's equipped with Phalanx CIW's, for instance -- would be "somewhat scarce in the rest of the fleet" and could have an adverse effect on "overall fleet readiness for contingencies that differ in character from the one now being addressed in the Persian Gulf."⁵⁵

An analysis of the monetary cost involved in the operation (to date) reveals a scramble to cover expenses through a shifting of operations and maintenance (O+MN)

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House Committee on Banking, p. 77.

⁵⁴

Ibid., p. 22.

⁵⁵

Ibid.

monies and through supplemental appropriations. It also underscores the absolute necessity to identify the sustainability time-frame prior to the insertion of forces as the cost of such open-ended commitments tends to skyrocket in direct proportion to political and military attempts to demonstrate resolve by extending the force on station.

The monetary cost associated with the Gulf operation has normally been framed in terms of incremental cost which includes only the "above-normal costs incurred by U.S. ships and aircraft in the region."⁵⁶ The FY-1987 incremental cost was fixed at \$69 million. This cost was absorbed by the military services during FY-1987 by deferring some scheduled maintenance. The FY-1988 incremental cost was approximately \$10 to \$15 million per month or about \$130 to \$150 million on an annual basis. Some estimates had the cost fixed at \$20 million per month. Congress, as a part of the FY-1988 Continuing Resolution, provided \$100 million to help cover the FY-1988 incremental cost incurred in the Gulf region. The U.S. Navy has testified before Congress that this \$100 million would be enough to cover incremental costs only through the third quarter of FY-1988.⁵⁷ Incremental cost includes expenses for spare parts, fuel, and hazardous

⁵⁶

Ibid., p. 20.

⁵⁷

Ibid., p. 21.

58
duty pay which was authorized in August of 1987. A more
accurate assessment of the incremental cost of the Gulf
operations would include the cost of repairing the Stark
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(\$40 million) , the Roberts (\$100 million), three crashed
helicopters (\$1 million each), and perhaps even the possible
monetary compensation to the families of those on board Iran
Air Flight 655 estimated to be in the tens of millions of
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dollars. If the Roberts cannot be economically
repaired, a replacement ship of the same class would cost
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\$350 to \$400 million.

An analysis of the costs involved in the Persian Gulf
would not be complete without the additional, and perhaps
most important, dimension of the human factor. Aside from
the casualty figures (37 killed on the Stark, 7 killed

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U.S. forces in the Gulf region received free diesel
marine and jet fuel from the government of Kuwait. For more
information see: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign
Affairs, Subcommittee on Arms Control, International
Security and Science, and on Europe and the Middle East,
U.S. Policy in the Persian Gulf (Washington: U.S. Govt.
Print. Off., 15 December 1987), p. 27.

59
The Iraqi government has agreed to pay the cost to
repair the ship, but there remains concern over whether the
Iraqis will renig on their promise or how quickly payment
will be made. See: House Committee on Banking, p. 76.

60
House Committee on Banking, p. 21.

61
As of this writing, the Roberts has undergone
extensive repairs, conducted sea trials in October 1989, and
is back in the fleet.

in the helicopter crashes, and other wounded on the Stark and Roberts), there is a cost associated with the daily strain on the personnel deployed to the region.⁶² Long at-sea periods, extreme weather conditions, lack of quality and accessible liberty ports, and extended family separations, unless properly managed, can all lead to low morale and poor retention. While morale was maintained at an exceptionally high level due to the "real world" nature of the Persian Gulf operations, extended deployments and reduced stateside periods result in increased family separations and is "bound to have a negative impact on morale and overall retention."⁶³ The dramatic increase in our 1979 Indian Ocean presence precipitated by the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, coupled with the drastic force cutbacks of the 1970's led to dismal retention rates and low morale in the early 1980's -- as one observer flatly commented: "We nearly wore out our people."⁶⁴ Such lessons are indelibly etched in the corporate memories of those servicemen who labored through those lean years and can ill-afford to be overlooked when sizing the force for future operations. Due to the length of enlistment contracts, a

62

House Committee on Banking, p. 22.

63

Arnott and Gaffney, p. 27.

64

Webb, "National Strategy, the Navy, and the Persian Gulf," p. 38.

more accurate assessment of how the Persian Gulf operations affected morale can not be made until the retention figures can be calculated upon the expiration of those contracts.

Desired Actions

As Arnott and Gaffney point out, the actual use of force in a political role to influence another nation requires careful consideration and analysis.⁶⁵ The primary focus of the military commander will be on the ends to be achieved. In other words, what is the military objective and how can it best be achieved? The U.S. Navy's skillful modification of equipment and tactics along with good old-fashioned perseverance, hard work, and professionalism led to the successful achievement of the immediate military objective: the safe escort of the 11 reflagged Kuwaiti tankers. However, as mentioned above, the perception of performance often times can be more important than the ends achieved. This was painfully demonstrated in the aftermath of the 1983 Beirut bombing raid in which the loss of two aircraft with one airman killed and another captured,⁶⁶ "totally overshadowed the results achieved." Likewise, the force commander needs to know if there are specific areas in which the force should or should not operate and

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Arnott and Gaffney, p. 27.

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Ibid.

more specifically what actions are to be avoided.

Answers to these questions are normally found in the peacetime ROE and any supplemental ROE requested by on-scene commanders and issued by higher authority to keep pace with a changing tactical situation.

An analysis of the Persian Gulf ROE reflects an incremental broadening of their scope after each of the three major U.S.-Iranian clashes along with a concomitant shift in policy which has been described as going from "low-profile reluctance to cautious engagement and finally to exuberant intervention."⁶⁸

After the first mining and missile incidents in September and October of 1987, the United States expanded the ROE to include protection of all U.S.-owned shipping in the Gulf (in addition to the 11 reflagged tankers). After the April of 1988 mining incident, the ROE was expanded to include any ship finding itself under attack by Iran.⁶⁹ In a 29 April, 1988 press conference, former Secretary of Defense Carlucci defined the new rules by announcing protection for "friendly, innocent, neutral vessels, flying a non-belligerent flag, outside declared war exclusion zones, that are not carrying

67

Ibid.

68

Sick Statement, p. 60.

69

Ibid.

contraband or resisting legitimate visit and search by a
Persian Gulf belligerent." ⁷⁰ This change in ROE would,
theoretically, allow the United States to aid the types of
ships that had been the primary focus of Iranian attack. In
a curious qualification of the new policy, Carlucci stated
that "following a request from a vessel under attack,
assistance will be rendered by U.S. warships or aircraft if
the unit is in the vicinity and its mission permits
rendering such assistance" ⁷¹ (emphasis added). The two-
pronged qualification to this pledge of assistance (access
and mission permitting) sent a series of mixed signals not
only to Iran but to U.S. operational commanders as well. To
the driver of an IRG Boghammer gunboat, the signal was
clear: simply ensure no U.S. warship (particularly those
with embarked attack helicopters) was within striking
distance when conducting an attack and then beat a faster
than normal retreat back to your sanctuary to be able to
come out and fight again another day. While procedures to
link CVBG based attack aircraft outside the Gulf to surface
ships inside the Gulf had been developed, distance and CVBG
positioning generally precluded a response timely enough to
stop the attack or intercept and destroy a fleeing attacker.

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John H. Cushman, Jr., "U.S. Expands Protection
in Gulf to any Neutral Vessel Attacked," The New York Times,
30 April 1988, p. 3.

71

Ibid.

Without clearance to attack staging bases, providing "assistance" after the fact was unlikely to deter future attacks. The quick response by a section of A-6E's to the attack on the Willie Tide is certainly an exception to this rule, but the aircraft were already on-station in the Strait of Hormuz as part of the retaliatory strike package and were forbidden to attack the surviving Boghammers as they beached themselves on Abu Musa Island. As mentioned previously, small boat attacks continued -- some with reckless abandon -- as evidenced by the skirmish with the Vincennes on 3 July.

To the U.S. operational commander such a "mission permitting" qualification presented a dilemma analogous to that faced by the fighter pilot schooled in the tactic of "never leaving your wingman" and only served to further frustrate those naval commanders finding themselves in positions unable to render assistance (due to mission requirements) to those frightened voices making frantic radio distress calls while under attack, for help from any U.S. warship. This situation is bound to introduce an element of uncertainty into not only what the military objective really is, but what courses of action are desired by higher authority, appropriate for the immediate tactical situation, and authorized by the ROE. As one analyst sadly commented:

One can only have sympathy for the naval commanders in the Gulf who are operating in close quarters, close to a hostile coast, surrounded by hundreds of commercial ships and planes, among which may be lurking an enemy. These skilled professionals are required to make split-second decisions of life and death every working day on the basis of fragmentary information.⁷²

In short, the (all-too-often) silently-posed question from policy implementers to policymakers -- what is it that you really want me to do? -- apparently went unheeded in the Persian Gulf. Perhaps Bull Halsey's 24 November, 1943 operations order to Arleigh Burke regarding the Buka-Rabaul evacuation may help put this problem in perspective as it provides an interesting case study by which to illustrate this point: "Thirty-one-knot Burke get athwart the Buka-Rabaul evacuation . . . If enemy contacted you know what to do."⁷³ One wonders how a similar message to the CJTFME would have played-out in the Persian Gulf forty-four years later: "Thirty-one-knot Burke get athwart the Strait of Hormuz . . . If just one Iranian attack on neutral shipping observed, you know what to do." While such a latter-day version of Halsey's execute order may seem out of place in a high-tech weapons and high-speed communications environment,

72

Sick Statement, p. 60.

73

E.P. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, Sea Power: A Naval History (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1981), p. 727.

the point of clear, concise and achievable ROE should not be lost on the policymaker.

Outcome

Finally, Arnott and Gaffney note that the military commander must try to anticipate all possible outcomes prior to inserting forces. Primarily, this process involves an objective determination of the factors which define success and achievement of the objective. If the anticipated outcome is deemed unsatisfactory, then the objective should be re-evaluated to determine if it can be achieved by the use of force.⁷⁴ Also central to this process is a determination of when the crisis is over and at what point the forces can be withdrawn. Conversely, what factors indicate that events are not proceeding according to plan and either additional forces or another course of action is required? With respect to the latter question, a recent study correctly concluded that the success of the protection of shipping plan was due in large part to the fact "that most of the contingency planning, response to crises, and command and control procedures were all done within doctrinally prescribed frameworks . . . without inventing radically different methods."⁷⁵ Likewise, the effective

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Arnott and Gaffney, p. 28.

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Terry Sheffield, et al., p. 72.

military responses to subtle political shifts inside the Gulf or in U.S. objectives played a direct role in the tactical success of the operation. This accomplishment was the result of effective political-military coordination at the tactical level coupled with the intelligent use of sophisticated communications systems to relay information and orders up and down the entire chain-of-command.

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However, with respect to the former questions, there is evidence to suggest that the process of anticipating outcomes was not adequately addressed in the months preceding the implementation of the protection of shipping plan nor in the establishment of escalatory ROE. For example, the ex post facto nature of the identification, friend or foe (IFF) agreements worked out between the United States and Iraq in the aftermath of the Stark tragedy attests to the claim that such procedures should have been contemplated and in-place prior to inserting forces into a war zone. If such agreements were not politically desirable or unobtainable, then U.S. ships (and aircraft) should have been kept well-outside the declared exclusionary zones (see Table 7). The Stark incident also raised the issue of adequate force structure in terms of force levels and CIWS capable ships. In fact, the incident precipitated the decision to substantially increase U.S. naval presence. In

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Ibid., p. 73.

other words, the Stark tragedy forced a reassessment of what it would take to successfully conduct the protection of shipping plan -- a reassessment, due to its potentially adverse domestic political impact, the administration did not want to make. Similarly, in an equally dramatic but less costly manner, the failure to adequately prepare for minecountermeasures (MCM) in the months preceding the Bridgeton incident once again reflects (this time) the navy's admitted failure to think through and be prepared for all possible outcomes. Given the previous evidence of the mine threat off Kuwait, it remains difficult to understand why the convoy sailed in the first place, let alone not having MCM forces prepositioned in the Gulf. ⁷⁷ In a 29 September 1987 statement before Congress, the Chairman of the JCS admitted that the navy had simply underestimated the seriousness of the mining threat. In the scramble to correct the deficiency, the United States airlifted a squadron of CH-53 (Super Stallion) MCM helicopters to the U.S. base at Diego Garcia for further transportation to the

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Both Iran and Iraq mined each others ports early in the war and mines that had broken their moorings had been found floating in the Gulf ever since. Prior to July of 1987, four ships had struck mines in the channel leading to Kuwait's Al-Ahmadi oil terminal. A U.S. Navy Explosive Ordinance Disposal Team (EODT) had found ten mines in that channel presumably covertly laid by Iran. For more information see: House Committee on Armed Services Report, p. 47.

Gulf on board the amphibious ship, the Gaudalcanal. With the exception of the April 1988 Roberts incident, no other U.S.-owned ship was damaged by mines throughout the remainder of the operation.

The political failure to obtain even a token commitment of assistance from U.S. allies prior to the public endorsement of Kuwait's reflagging request illustrates another case in which the failure to think through policy manifested itself. By framing the initial protection of shipping plan in unilateral terms and then pursuing diplomatic efforts to enlarge the commitment into a multilateral operation by securing allied assistance, the United States forced a showdown with its allies over who had the greater share of responsibility in protecting Western oil supplies. For the Europeans, the disruption of less than 1% of the oil flow simply did not justify the dispatch of scarce resources to the Gulf. It was not until several European nations perceived the threat to their interests as substantial (as a result of mining incidents in the Khor Fakkan international anchorage in the Gulf of Oman) that assistance was finally provided and the operation became (de facto) multilateral. (See Chapter VII for a detailed analysis of allied cooperation in the Gulf.)

The history of warfare is replete with the accidental killing of non-combatants as well as friendly and neutral forces. One only need recall Clausewitz's concepts of friction and the fog of war and his admonition that each part of the military machine is composed of individuals each retaining his own potential of friction to understand why things go wrong in war.⁷⁹ As both the Stark and Iran Air tragedies clearly demonstrate, inserting forces into a declared war zone with a tremendously high-concentration of tanker and commercial air traffic is not only dangerous but requires a willingness on behalf of policymakers to accept the risks and responsibilities inherent in this historical fact of life. If such risks are deemed politically or militarily unacceptable, then the objective should be re-evaluated to determine if it is attainable by the use of force. If the level of risk is judged acceptable, then appropriate ROE should be constructed to enable the on-scene commander to properly defend his assets while simultaneously controlling the initiative thereby allowing "diplomacy to be tested without offering up our naval assets as convenient targets."⁸⁰ Settling on some middle ground has the unintended effect of accelerating the inherent tendency for

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von Clausewitz, pp. 119-121.

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Webb, "At Least the Navy Knows What it's Doing in the Gulf," p. A.21.

things to go wrong in war and places the military officer with his finger on the trigger in a terribly compromising position. The available official records are replete with a myriad of assessments on the risks to U.S. ships from various forms of Iranian attack, including terrorist and suicide attack, or with the risks associated with becoming involved outright in the Iran-Iraq War. However, based on the flurry of activity and finger-pointing between and within the executive and legislative branches of government in the wake of the Stark, Bridgeton, and Iran Air incidents, there is little open-source evidence to suggest whether or not an adequate risk assessment was ever made on the effect friction would have on non-combatants. Late night "what if?" sessions remain central to the operational planning and force sizing process.

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Four months prior to the Iran Air tragedy, the author had a fascinating and enlightening dinner discussion at a Mombassa, Kenya, hotel with the captain of a Swiss Air A-300 Air Bus who routinely flew the airway linking Bandar Abbas and Dubai. Aside from listening to amusing anecdotes about his routine visual sightings of and idle radio chatter with U.S.A.F./Saudi AWACS patrols and not so amusing anecdotes about being shot at while making an approach to the Teheran Airport (Swiss Air subsequently terminated flights into Teheran), the author came away from the discussion disturbed by the volume of international air traffic in the vicinity of the Strait of Hormuz and immediately notified the appropriate intelligence authorities regarding the discussion and impressions. Subsequent "in-house" discussions regarding the high density of air (and surface) traffic ensued yielding a healthy (and sometimes heated) debate over the proverbial "shoot first and ask questions later" dilemma. As a result of these

In direct relation to the decision to reinforce is the inevitable point at which forces must be withdrawn from the crisis situation. Without a definition of success, this often becomes an elusive point to reach. In a carefully worded statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, former Secretary of Defense Weinberger attempted to define "victories" in relation to the stated political objectives: First, the objective of maintaining freedom of navigation for U.S.-flag vessels and the protection of Western access to oil is described as being "obtained every time a tanker convoy moves through the Gulf safely."⁸²

Secondly, the security and stability of moderate Gulf Arab regimes, while admittedly "somewhat more intangible," has already been achieved based on "their public and private statements that they have been greatly reassured by our actions. . . . " Allied support and participation is given as another example of the success of U.S. policy. Thirdly, the objective of limiting Soviet influence is defined as having succeeded based on the fact they [Soviets] have been

"what if?" sessions and coupled with the skill and professionalism of the planners and operators, the Enterprise CVBG completed its tour on station in the North Arabian Sea without incident. It should also be noted that according to the formal investigation into the downing of Iran Air 655 (p.15), the first time that CJTFME promulgated commercial airline flight information to ships in the Persian Gulf was on 28 June, 1988 . . . approximately one year after the insterion of forces into the Gulf.

given only three Kuwaiti ships to protect and they "have not been provided access to facilities anywhere in the

region. . . ."⁸³ Ten months later in another carefully crafted answer to a direct question regarding his definition of victory, then Secretary of Defense Carlucci responded:

We will know that we have won when Iran stops attacking non-belligerent shipping in the Gulf. The best hope for that to occur is when we have successfully persuaded Iran to comply with UNSC resolution 598.⁸⁴

However, when examined closely, each one of these definitions of "success" remains somewhat limited in scope. For example, claims that Western access to oil was secure based on the safe passage of the 11 Kuwaiti tankers fails to recognize that attacks on the remaining neutral ships increased over time. Perhaps a more realistic assessment would be to claim that portion of Western oil supplied by Kuwait as secure as not one drop of Kuwaiti oil was spilled while under U.S. escort.⁸⁵ Similarly, declaring that Soviet influence in the region has been limited based on the

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Ibid.

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U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1989, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 18 February 1988), p. 99.

85

The Bridgeton was empty while on the inbound run to Kuwait when she struck the mine.

number of ships and facilities they have in the Gulf ignores geopolitical reality -- by competing with the Soviets in a limited area defined by Kuwait, the United States cleared a direct path for major, and as one strategist notes decisive, Soviet influence in Iran as the Rafsanjani demarche clearly demonstrates.⁸⁶ Curiously, if not surprisingly, the "somewhat more intangible" goal of demonstrating resolve and instilling confidence in our regional friends appears to have been a resounding success regardless of the low-key (public) manner in which they have extended appreciation. In their seemingly contorted and painful attempts to define victory, perhaps our policymakers would have been wise to heed Clausewitz's advice that:

A major victory can only be obtained by positive measures aimed at a decision, never by simply waiting on events. In short, even in the defense, a major stake alone can bring a major gain.⁸⁷

Having defined his version of "success," Secretary Weinberger, when pressed, attempted to define the point at which forces could be withdrawn to pre-crisis levels. Drawing an analogy between previous increases in force levels in relation to the threat in other international

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Robert E. Hunter, "Statement," U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Policy in the Persian Gulf, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print Off., 16 June 1987), p. 258.

87

von Clausewitz, p. 616.

bodies of water, he stated that forces would be reduced when the threat to the "passage of free, non-belligerent, innocent commerce over these international waters" no longer existed. Accordingly, elimination of the threat to Gulf shipping, he stated, would require the passage and enforcement of a U.S. arms embargo and an end to the Iran-Iraq War on land and at sea. Once these ends were achieved,⁸⁸ then forces would be reduced to pre-crisis levels. This approach lacks credibility on several counts: First, it lacks an appreciation for the protracted nature of the Iran-Iraq War. At the time the decision to reflag was made, the dynamics of the war had not shifted enough in favor of either belligerent to indicate that an end of the war was in sight. Likewise, if the insertion of forces into the Gulf was intended to carry with it the veiled threat of pressuring Iran to quit the war, then the insertion should have been timed to coincide with a significant shift in the dynamics of the war in favor of Iraq. The summer of 1987 simply did not provide such a strategic moment. Adding a portion of patience to the overall Gulf strategy would have eventually revealed the first months of 1988 as the ideal time for a show of strength and solidarity. Secondly, the comparison of the Persian Gulf naval build-up to previous peacetime build-ups in response to threats in the

Mediterranean or Caribbean as an example of when the Gulf forces could be reduced to pre-crisis levels is a classic case of mixing apples and oranges. This (false) analogy fails to appreciate the fact that the vast majority of post-World War II uses of naval power have been in the naval presence role and as such were rarely interposed between two implacable belligerents locked in a protracted and fierce conflict -- a conflict which had spilled over in to treacherous and restricted waters. The insertion of forces into these waters (a declared war zone) introduced a host of political and military complications that could have precluded an orderly and timely reduction of forces to pre-crisis levels. Finally, and as mentioned previously, by protecting the Kuwaiti tankers the United States merely encouraged Iraq to continue the tanker war and signaled Iran that, except for the 11 Kuwaiti tankers, all other merchant shipping was fair game. In short, the tactic of protecting the tankers ran counter to the U.S. strategic objective of ending the Iran-Iraq war. Reflagging, as a means to an end, could only bring about an end to the war if additional, expanded, and coordinated means were brought to bear upon

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An indepth review of the two major analytical studies conducted on the use of force as a political instrument (Cable's Gunboat Diplomacy: 1919-1979 and Blechman and Kaplan's Force Without War: 1946-1975) reveal an overwhelming majority of incidents involving the use of force falling into the following categories: presence, exercises, surveillance, port visits, logistic and intelligence support, evacuations, civic action, transport,

Iran. Without such an effort, reflagging was nothing more than a limited political statement of support for Kuwait and the other GCC members.

The inability to give satisfactory strategic definition to crisis termination was manifested in several attempts to draw-down forces in response to mounting domestic political pressure over the course of the operation. The decision to reduce forces (however slightly) in February of 1988 to 29 ships may have been ill-advised. The rhetoric emanating from Teheran in response to this public announcement, while difficult to assess, indicated that Teheran may have perceived the decision as a slight crack in U.S. resolve and emboldened Iran to continue its mine-laying operations after a considerable hiatus -- the Roberts was attacked within five weeks of the announcement. Conversely, the decision to maintain a high level of visibility in the wake of the U.N. sponsored cease fire was well-thought out and signaled Iran that whatever role U.S. forces played in pressuring Iran to stop fighting, that pressure would remain until it became readily apparent the ceasefire would hold. In summary,

construction, and alerts. Likewise, a more recent study by Philip D. Zelikow takes up where Blechman and Kaplan left off and catalogues the political use of force by the United States from 1975 to 1984 with similar results. Very few of the over 300 incidents examined in these studies fall into the invasion, attack, convoy, or mine clearing categories and none involve convoy and mine clearing operations in a declared war zone in restricted and hostile waters (the 1984 Red Sea mine clearance operation was conducted in a benign environment).

these force level decisions illustrate just two of the many policy twists and turns that result from inserting forces, then debating the strategy. Anticipating outcomes, defining success, and establishing mission completion criteria prior to the insertion of forces provides a framework within which to conduct the operation as well as a firm foundation upon which to size those forces and room to adjust to any political or military changes in the environment.

Summary of Findings

As the preceding analysis outlines, U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf as it pertained to the reflagging of the 11 Kuwaiti tankers is found to be tactically successful but strategically deficient as the military tactic of protecting the Kuwaiti ships was not placed in a comprehensive strategic context. The confusion over the proper definition of the objective allowed the available options to remain limited to two unattractive alternatives: reflag and protect Kuwaiti ships or abandon the public commitment to Kuwait and suffer the loss of credibility in the Arab world. The strategic course of action chosen to achieve the stated political objectives depended on Iraqi war aims and Iranian restraint to succeed. Additionally, the decision to reflag was worked out independently of the logistical and operational details of escorting the Kuwaiti ships. In other words, the formulation of the logistical and operational plans lagged behind the formulation of the overall strategic plan

rather than being an integral part of the original decision. Moreover, the Gulf policy violated one of the cardinal precepts of matching political objectives with military realities: avoid multiple objectives with competing priorities. Even a cursory inspection of the mission statement contained in the first paragraph of The Weinberger Report reveals a host of platitude-sounding objectives with no clear sense of which objective has priority over the others:

Protecting eleven Kuwaiti tankers under U.S. flag is not part of an open-ended unilateral American commitment to defend all non-belligerent shipping in the Persian Gulf. It is a limited but effective signal of our determination to stand up to intimidation, to support our friends, and to help contain, and eventually end, the Iran-Iraq War.⁹⁰

Achievement of these objectives, particularly with the limited political and military means chosen, presented a formidable challenge to CENTCOM. Unfortunately, short of kidnaping Saddam Hussein and turning him over to the Iranians, the only way to stop the war was to deny Iran the means by which to wage it. Reflagging, as a means to an end, could only bring about an end to the war if additional, expanded, coordinated, and enforcable methods were brought to bear upon Iran. If the United States was serious about stopping the flow of arms to Iran, then a strategy should have been developed to dovetail Iraq's strategy of cutting-

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The Weinberger Report, p. i.

off Iran's oil revenues. Without such an effort, reflagging was nothing more than a limited political statement of support for Kuwait and the other GCC members. For example, since the deployment of Silkworm missiles precipitated the crisis and expanded U.S. involvement in the Gulf, then an effective strategy to remove or neutralize those missiles and prevent further deliveries should have been developed. Simple diplomatic protests to China regarding the sale of missiles to Iran and a polite plea that no further sales nor deliveries take place, flies in the face of an effective policy designed to stem the flow of arms to Iran. Effective retaliatory action should have been taken against China for its outrageous and fallacious denial of providing Silkworms to Iran. The Chinese should have been confronted with a choice of whether they desired to continue to receive the transfer of U.S. technology or continue the transfer of their technology (Silkworms and other supplies) to Iran. To pretend that diplomatic protests alone would stop the flow of missiles to Iran or even punish the Chinese, obfuscates the policymakers moral obligation to the implementers of the policy -- after all, the Silkworms were aimed at U.S. sailors and ships plying the waters of the Gulf while protecting other nations' access to oil. Unfortunately, a similar case can be made

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House committee on Armed Services Report,
pp. 77-78.

for the secret sale of U.S. Hawk surface-to-air missiles to Iran as disclosed by the Iran-Contra affair. While admittedly an aberration in U.S. policy, the sale undermined Operation Staunch and left those U.S. airmen flying missions in the Gulf wondering whether or not one or more of those missiles would be fired in their direction in the event the policymakers decided to send U.S. aircraft over the beach.

The preceding analysis also illustrates that the primary objective of the United States in agreeing to reflag the Kuwaiti tankers was to limit Soviet influence and naval activity in the region. However, several indepth analyses of the U.S.-Soviet naval arms limitation talks of the mid to late 1970's have revealed an interesting and often overlooked insight into Soviet military activities and objectives in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf regions: the Soviets simply do not regard the Persian Gulf as an area of naval rivalry with the United States. After learning from the arms limitation talks that technological difficulties precluded the deployment of U.S. ballistic missile submarines to the Indian Ocean and that the strategic nuclear threat to its southern underbelly was thereby negated, the Soviets have yet to surge large numbers of naval forces into the region neither in response to repeated U.S. naval deployments to the North Arabian Sea nor in

coordination with their invasion of Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, the U.S. reflagging policy was based on the false assumption that a major Soviet gain and a corresponding U.S. loss in the region was about to take place. As mentioned previously, U.S. Persian Gulf policy merely cleared a direct path for major, if not decisive, Soviet influence in the region as the Rafsanjani demarche clearly demonstrates.

U.S. policy also appears to have been based on a second false assumption regarding the nature of Kuwait's motive for requesting outside help. By enlisting superpower assistance, Kuwait hoped to put an end to the threat to its domestic security and territorial integrity posed by the potential fulfillment of the Khomeini regime's publicly declared hegemonic objectives in the region that would surely follow in the wake of an Iranian victory in the war. In retrospect, it is clear that Kuwait's primary reason for requesting assistance was not to protect its oil supplies but rather to provide a security buffer between itself and Iran so that attacks on Kuwait would occur at sea rather than against Kuwaiti territory. If a proper analysis of

Sick Statement, pp. 45-47. For further information on the Indian Ocean naval arms limitation talks and the internal Soviet debate over the role of naval forces in power projection see: Francis Fukuyama, "Soviet Civil-Military Relations and the Power Projection Mission," Rand Report R-3504-AF. April 1987.

Kuwait's motive had taken place, then other policy options could have been developed without abruptly abandoning the commitment to Kuwait for a course of action that accounted for the achievement of the overall strategic objective. In other words, in order to ease Kuwait's domestic security fears, alternative methods of protecting Kuwait's oil supplies should have been developed. For instance, efforts could have been focused on the accelerated construction of the pipeline from the Kuwaiti oil fields to Saudi Arabia's East-West Petroline. In the construction interim, Kuwait should have been strongly encouraged to adopt a shuttle tanker system similar to the system being used by Iran to offset Iraqi air attacks. Additionally, the formulation and implementation of an Arab oil sharing plan should have been actively pursued by the United States as an integral part of its overall strategy. Under such a plan, the GCC members would lend each other oil exports in the event a major disruption is experienced by any one member. Modeled on the industrial countries 1974 "Safety Net" Agreement, the plan would make available compensating oil exports if any GCC member's oil producing capacity is adversely affected. Repayment would be made in a similar fashion to Iraq's War Relief Agreement with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait: barrel-for-barrel without interest and irrespective of current price. Such a plan was under serious consideration in January of 1988 by the GCC and should have been implemented in

conjunction with other methods of securing Kuwait's oil
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supplies. Incorporating these alternative methods into
the overall Gulf strategy, would have allowed U.S. naval
units to concentrate on the specific and more narrow
military mission of freedom of navigation in international
waterways (possibly on a multilateral basis) thereby
bringing direct, rather than indirect, military pressure to
bear upon Iran to quit the war. By pushing for additional
strategic payoffs, the United States, in its limited effort
to protect freedom of navigation, merely reduced the chances
of attaining its ultimate objective -- ending the Iran-Iraq
War -- within a reasonable time frame. Since outright
collaboration with Iraq was not politically feasible and
multilateral cooperation in the form of a U.N. naval
peacekeeping force not operationally feasible, then the
United States should have either been prepared to accept the
mantle of "policeman of the Gulf" and muster the political
will and military resolve to end, once and for all, the
menace to international shipping being perpetrated by Iran
or have simply ignored the Kuwaiti request and waited for
the dynamics of the Iran-Iraq War to take effect. As
mentioned above, settling on some middle ground may make the
policymakers look less warlike, but it also has the

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"Mideast Safety Net Would Lend Oil If Gulf Is
Disrupted," Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, 11 January 1988,
p. 3.

unintended effect of accelerating the inherent tendency for things to go wrong in war and places the implementers of the policy in militarily vulnerable and politically compromising positions.

Lessons Learned

Due to the premature public commitment to Kuwait, the above "what should have been" approach to the dilemma faced by U.S. policymakers regarding the Persian Gulf must remain in the realm of the academic. However, such an analysis can provide valuable lessons learned for future applications of U.S. military power in pursuit of political objectives. Given the nature of the commitment to Kuwait and the subsequent strategic course of action chosen by the United States, what then are the main lessons learned from our experience in the Persian Gulf crisis? Ironically, perhaps the most articulate and straightforward answer to this somewhat elusive and complex question lies in the response by the First Sea Lord of the Admiralty, Admiral Sir William Staveley, to a similar question regarding his Armilla Patrol -- a response which reflects a rare sense of strategic insight that bears quoting in its entirety:

First, ensure your political objectives fit with the military realities; second, when you send naval forces into a region to protect national shipping, keep that aim firmly in mind and avoid any temptation to push for additional political or strategic payoffs; thirdly, ensure you are rapidly informed about day to day changes in the potential threat (especially by keeping closely in touch with the merchant shipping you are there to protect). In addition,

only send first rate ships and men, equipped and trained to cope with the most intense and demanding levels of conflict and set de-escalatory and non-provocative rules of engagement which do not hamstring your ship's capacity to defend either themselves or vessels under their protection but which incorporate the principle of minimum force. Without revealing details, allow the general principles behind the ROE to generally be known to prevent painful misunderstandings. Review your ROE regularly as the situation evolves. Finally, ensure that your objectives and reasons for sending naval forces are clearly understood by the international community.⁹⁴

Similarly, the resort to force by the United States on 18 April, 1988, in response to the mining attack on the Roberts raised yet another set of questions as well as a corresponding set of lessons learned regarding the appropriate use of force. Some reasoned that the use of force was measured, restrained, and in proportion to the violent act committed by Iran. All aspects of international law had been strictly adhered to in conducting the strike and the act of reprisal completely justified under the law of armed conflict. Others held that if the objective of force is to prevail, to punish an aggressor beyond his ability to respond and to deter future acts of aggression by "exacting a political and at times a human cost," then the U.S. response was disproportionate at the lower end of the scale -- you don't protect your sailors from future mining attacks by shooting up oil platforms or by continually

sweeping mines: you do it by removing the mine-

95,96

layers. Still, others argued that the use of force and the principle of proportionality assumes a moral obligation to the implementers of the policy: by placing combat forces into combat situations without a clearly defined combat mission, we give our adversaries a "weird sort of equality: we reduce our own level of power to the point that our enemies can compete. We call this

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restraint." Or succinctly stated another way:

It's like kicking the shins of a man with a machine gun. You do not take his capabilities away, and you do not demonstrate to him that you are serious about using your own capabilities. And you must nervously await his reaction, at the time and place of his choosing.⁹⁸

Additional groups maintained that the political constraints inherent in obtaining our strategic objectives in the Gulf region required discreet and well-timed "signal-sending" which in turn precluded a firmer response on a much higher

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Webb, "National Strategy, the Navy, and the Persian Gulf," p. 43.

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Webb, "At Least the Navy Knows What It's Doing in the Gulf."

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Webb, "National Strategy, the Navy, and the Persian Gulf," p. 42.

98

Webb, "At Least the Navy Knows What It's Doing in Gulf."

rung of the proportionality ladder. These groups claim that when the political objective is strictly limited, immediate resort to the higher and more potent modes of retaliation will be ruled out.⁹⁹

Regardless of one's position on these issues, most objective analysts agree that the initial military reprisal to the mining attack on the U.S.S. Roberts (destruction of two GOSP's and one warship) was entirely within the constraints of the principle of proportional response. Likewise, the subsequent reaction by U.S. naval forces later in the day to the additional hostile acts committed by the Iranian SAAM class frigates and Boghammer speed boats is axiomatic in that "the use of deadly force is lawful when¹⁰⁰ defending against deadly force."

What is not as clear, is the political and moral context within which the "measured response" decision took place. Obviously, the restrained use of force was not designed to physically keep the sealanes clear of mines. But rather to send a series of diplomatic signals to our regional friends that this type of response was in keeping with their strategic interests and to deter our adversaries

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D.P. O'Connell, "Limited War at Sea Since 1945," Michael Howard, ed. Restraints on War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 123-134.

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Dennis R. Neutze, "The Gulf of Sidra Incident: A Legal Perspective," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, January 1982, p. 4.

from committing further violent acts. However, the danger in signal sending lies in the interpretation on the receiving end: there's no guarantee the signal will be interpreted in precisely the way intended and may in fact be seen as a lack of resolve instead of strength. Those who argue that a restrained use of force is required when attempting to coerce an Iranian leadership caught up in revolutionary fervor and irrationality to stop laying mines, may have lost sight of the fact that even an irrational Iranian cannot lay mines he does not have.

CHAPTER VI

ENDS VERSUS MEANS: ALLIANCE COHESION THEORY

A state located between two powerful states should seek collaboration and protection from the stronger of the two.¹

Kautilya
Arthasastra

Alliances are broken from considerations of interest; and in this respect Republics are much more careful in the observance of treaties than Princes.²

Machiavelli
The Discourses

I have only one purpose, the destruction of Hitler, and my life is much simplified thereby. If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons.³

Winston S. Churchill
The Grand Alliance

Purpose

When analyzing international alliances, Churchill's concept of grand alliances notwithstanding, theorists of international relations pose two fundamental theoretical

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T.N. Ramaswamy, Essentials of Indian Statecraft, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p. 112.

2

Nicoli Machiavelli, The Discourses, Book I.59 (New York: Random House, 1940), p. 268.

³ Winston S. Churchill, The Grand Alliance (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951), p. 370

questions: first, what factors explain the formation of alliances? And second, once an alliance has been created, what factors affect the level of cohesion (or discord) among the alliance members? This chapter will focus on the latter question by examining the factors that determine intra-alliance cooperative and noncooperative behavior. Moreover, this examination establishes the analytical framework within which the analysis of NATO's efforts to address Persian Gulf security issues as they pertained to the U.S. decision to reflag eleven Kuwaiti oil tankers is made in Chapter Seven.

Nature of Alliances

Prior to establishing the analytical framework for intra-alliance cooperative and noncooperative behavior, a word is in order on why states make alliances. Alliances, as Robert Osgood notes, are the most binding obligations nations can make in order to stabilize international power configurations that may affect their vital interests.⁴ They add a degree of precision and specificity to informal or tacit agreements. Alignments of nations, as George Liska points out, have long been associated with the balancing of power in both theory and practice. Using economic terminology, Liska states that "alliances aim at maximizing

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Robert E. Osgood, Alliances and American Foreign Policy (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), pp. 17-18.

gains and sharing liabilities. The decision to align⁵ is made with reference to national interests."

Theoretically, the relationship of alliances to balance of power has both a positive and negative component: positively, states enter into alliances in order to enhance or even complement each other's capability. Negatively, an alliance can be viewed as a "means of reducing the impact of an antagonistic power, perceived as pressure, which⁶ threatens one's independence." In short, all alliances depend on the existence of identical interests and potential gains. But the question arises: interests and gains in what? Liska answers this question in terms of national and international security, stability, and the status of states⁷ and regimes.

Similarly, many theorists of international relations have categorized the functions of alliances to include, inter alia, the accretion of external power, internal⁸ security, restraint of allies, and international order. Likewise, these same theorists, in their examination of the

⁵ George S. Liska, Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 26.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., p. 27.

⁸ Osgood, p. 21.

evolution of alliances, categorize alliances by type to include offensive and defensive, wartime and peacetime, bilateral and multilateral, guarantee and mutual assistance,⁹ and institutionalized and noninstitutionalized. The common theme, however, running throughout all alliance formation theory remains the dependency on the existence of identical and commonly shared interests. These common interests remain at the center of the security dilemma faced by the United States and its NATO allies in dealing with the complex Persian Gulf crisis.

Hypotheses on Intra-Alliance Cooperation

Prior to refining the four propositions regarding intra-alliance behavior, a method of measuring cooperation and discord within the context of NATO should be established. In his article, "NATO and the Persian Gulf: Examining Intra-Alliance Behavior," Charles A. Kupchan notes that cooperative behavior can be measured along three dimensions:

First, allies can engage in joint operations or offer explicit military assistance to each other. Put bluntly, they can undertake coordinated actions. Second, cooperation can take the form of compromise on policy issues, which is then reflected in official statements and documents. Third, cooperative behavior can be measured by economic contributions to collective defense capability. Allies cooperate when they reach some

mutually acceptable and reasonable agreement about sharing the defense burden.¹⁰

Kupchan then draws on three theories -- balance-of-power theory, collective action theory, and pluralist theory -- to assist in examining and explaining the emergence of cooperative and noncooperative behavior between alliance members. The balance-of-power theory asserts that alliance cohesion fluctuates with each members' shared perceptions of threats to their security interests. Collective action theory focuses upon the distribution (even or uneven) of military and economic capability of each member and group action dynamics as the two key independent variables which determine alliance cohesion. Finally, pluralist theory shifts away from systemic considerations and views cooperation in terms of second image (state level) considerations. According to this theory, domestic political and economic variables are the main determinants of alliance behavior.

From these three theories, Kupchan develops four hypotheses which can be used to test against the reflagging case study:

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Charles A. Kupchan, "NATO and the Persian Gulf: Examining Intra-Alliance Behavior," International Organization, 42, 2, Spring 1988, p. 323.

External Threat

The external threat hypothesis proposes that states cooperate to check threats from external powers. In other words, an increasing level of threat leads to alliance cohesion because member states seek to reinforce their declining security situation through cooperation.¹¹ This proposition has been formulated from George Liska's thesis that "a sudden increase of pressure in the form of a political demand or military threat is likely to consolidate an alliance."¹² The opposite effect -- discord -- has a tendency to occur when these pressures are relieved. In fact, alliances which obtain their cohesiveness from an external threat may disintegrate -- sometimes rapidly --¹³ when that threat is removed.

Theorists of international relations, most notably Ole R. Holsti, Terrence Hopmann, and John D. Sullivan have drawn on social-conflict studies to buttress the external threat hypothesis. They assume that cohesion is composed of some mix of behavioral and attitudinal aspects while conceding that the relationship between these two components is not

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Ibid., p. 324.

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Liska, p. 97.

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Ole R. Holsti, P. Terrence Hopmann, and John D. Sullivan, Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances: Comparative Studies (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), p. 97.

always clear. They also note an additional problem with cohesion in international alliances in that cohesion may be derived either from group consensus or coercion:

Presumably most consensual alliances are based upon an attempt to minimize liabilities which threaten the group from outside, and the alliance thereby provides benefits for its members in the form of protection against an external threat. Conversely, in coercive alliances, one major source of liabilities for noncohesive behavior may be the dominate member within the coalition instead of, or in addition to, the external enemy. In this case, at least one benefit of membership is a reduction of the threat from one's own allies.¹⁵

Holsti and company argue that, whether based on coercion (Warsaw Pact) or consensus (NATO), there appears to be validity in Liska's thesis that alliances will remain cohesive as long as they are able to "maintain the initial balance between the gains and liabilities which can be attributed to the alliance."¹⁶ In their analysis, Holsti and company treat both consensus and coercion-based alliances as cohesive as long as the alliance members maintain similar approaches to objectives and targets and continue to behave in a cooperative manner.

Holsti and company further buttress their proposition that alliance cohesion is a direct function of the degree of

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Ibid., p. 94.

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Ibid., p. 95. As an example, Holsti uses the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia to illustrate this point: When Czechoslovakia began to deviate from the communist system, Soviet action was designed to make painfully clear the severe liabilities associated with Czech nonconformity.

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Liska, p. 108.

cooperation (or conflict) between alliances and among alliance members by citing the work of the nineteenth-century German social scientist, Georg Simmel. According to Simmel, inter-group conflict tends to solidify the internal unity of a specific group as long as the basic values of that group remain intact. In short, "Groups at peace can allow antagonistic members to exist, since they can go their own way without creating severe internal schisms."¹⁷ On the other hand, as Simmel points out, conflict "pulls the members so tightly together and subjects them to such a uniform impulse that they either must completely get along with, or completely repel, one another."¹⁸ Furthermore, in the absence of a central sovereign power an alliance tends to disintegrate unless all members of that alliance share a common external threat (emphasis added). This line of reasoning, therefore, brings Holsti and company to the conclusion that conflict increases the concentration of an existing group, clouds boundaries between individual group members, and often times may bring certain members together who normally would have little if any contact with each other.¹⁹

¹⁷ Holsti, et al., p. 95.

¹⁸ Georg Simmel, Conflict (New York: Free Press, 1955), p. 92.

¹⁹ Holsti, et al., p. 95.

An expansion of Simmel's hypothesis can be found in Lewis Coser's The Functions of Social Conflict. Coser proposes that "outside conflict will strengthen the initial cohesion of the group and increase centralization."²⁰ Coser maintains that external conflict has a variety of unifying effects on a specific group: first, it increases the groups sense of identity by clearly establishing the boundaries which separate it from the "outside" world. Second, conflict mobilizes the energies and resources of a group in a concerted effort to provide for its own defense. Third, external conflict tends to make the group more intolerant of internal dissent and may in fact cause the group to search for and root out internal dissenters. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, external conflict may in fact bring certain members together who normally would have little if²¹ any reason to cooperate with each other. Coser does, however, provide one major qualification to his hypothesis that external conflict causes increased internal cohesion by noting that "conflict may enhance the cohesion of a group only when it concerns values, beliefs, and goals which do not contradict the basic assumptions or consensual values

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Lewis Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (New York: Free Press, 1956), p. 88.

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Holsti, et al., p. 96. For a more detailed analysis of Coser's thesis on the unifying effects external conflict has on group dynamics see his The Functions of Social Conflict, p. 38, p. 90, p. 95, pp. 103-104, and p. 147.

upon which group unity is based."

Additional theorists of international relations, such as Morton Kaplan, Hans Morgenthau, Arnold Wolfers and Amitai Etzioni maintain that the external threat hypothesis can be carried over into systems theory in that conflict between "actor systems" will produce a greater need for cooperation

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within each system. Interestingly, Liska takes the proposition to its highest level by claiming that a common enemy is the most important cause for alliance formations:

Movement toward alignment sets in only when another state intervenes as a threat. The weaker state rallies then to one stronger power as a reaction against the threat from another strong power. The stronger state assumes the role of a protective ally, interested mainly in keeping the resources of the potential victim out of the adversary's control. 24

It should also be noted that systems theorists see a direct relationship between conflict and cohesion in terms of the degree of polarity present in the international system. Kaplan, in particular, contends that the presence of conflict within a tight bipolar international system tends to produce very cohesive alliances. Conversely, conflict within a loose bipolar system may not produce

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Holsti, et al., p. 96.

23

Ibid., p. 97.

24

Liska, p. 13.

higher levels of cohesion in competing alliances and may in fact reduce cohesiveness.

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Holsti and company have attempted to design an empirically-based model to test their alliance cohesion thesis based on the measurement of three sets of variables. The dependent variable in the external threat hypothesis (as well as the alliance security dilemma, collective action and domestic politics hypotheses) is, of course, the degree of alliance cohesion defined in both behavioral and attitudinal terms. The independent variable is the degree of conflict between alliance systems and the perceptions of each internal alliance member toward the external threat to that alliance. Measurement models were then developed to analyze the behavioral and attitudinal components of alliance cohesion: computer content analysis was used to measure attitudinal consensus as a component of alliance cohesion and the perceived external threat to an alliance while

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As Holsti points out, a tight bipolar system is one in which there are two major blocs or power centers existing within the international system. These two blocs are organized hierarchically and dominated by the two major actors in the international political setting. Each bloc attempts, at a minimum, to match the unity and capability of the other bloc. Each is prepared to resort to war in order to prevent the other from achieving hegemony in the international system. On the other hand, a loose bipolar system finds a universal actor attempting to reduce the incompatibilities between blocs. As Kaplan notes, nations not belonging to either bloc try to "coordinate their national objectives with those of the universal actor and to subordinate the objectives of bloc actors to those of the universal actor." For a more detailed analysis see Morton A. Kaplan, System and Process in International Politics (New York: John Wiley and sons, 1957), p. 38.

events interaction data were used to measure conflict and cooperation between and within competing alliance systems. ²⁶

While the actual mechanics of these models remain outside the scope of this particular analysis, Holsti's findings (in terms of the external threat hypothesis) remain central to this analysis of allied cooperation during the Persian Gulf crisis. Based on their empirical research, Holsti and company have found that cooperation by actors in an international alliance toward an external actor or event is likely to increase cohesion and cooperation among those actors. This proposition is summarized by the following postulate:

The greater the similarity of orientations toward a common external object by the decision-makers in all member nations of an international alliance, the greater the cohesion of the alliance, at least with regard to that object.²⁷

Likewise, and using events interaction data to measure interactions among nations within an alliance, Holsti has formulated the following postulate upon which the behavioral component of alliance cohesion and cooperation is based:

The greater the cooperation and the less the conflict among members of an alliance, the greater the cohesion within the alliance.²⁸

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Holsti, et al., p. 109.

²⁷

Ibid., p. 103.

²⁸

Ibid., p. 109.

In summary, the external threat hypothesis asserts that states cooperate to check threats from external powers. Thus an external threat may bring alliances into existence and preserve their cohesion while periods of relaxation of an external threat may reduce alliance cohesion or lead to their disintegration or even promote fundamental structural changes as evidenced by the reduced Soviet threat to NATO in 1990. As Robert Osgood notes, "the internal concern of alliances tends to increase with their duration and with the diminished perception of an external threat."²⁹ Perhaps Amitai Etzioni summed it up best when he stated that "the threat of a common enemy is probably the condition most often credited with initiating the union of countries."³⁰ It therefore follows that an increasing level of threat leads to alliance cohesion because member states seek to reinforce their declining security situation through cooperation.³¹

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Osgood, p. 18.

30

Amitai Etzioni, Political Unification: A Comparative Study of Leaders and Forces (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965), p. 30.

31

Kupchan, p. 324. For additional information on the derivation of the external threat hypothesis, the reader is referred to the following seminal works on alliance theory: Morton A. Kaplan, System and Process in International Politics, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1957), p. 130. Joseph Frankel, International Relations, (London: Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 133; Hans J. Morgenthau, "Alliances in Theory and Practice," in Arnold Wolfers, ed.,

Alliance Security Dilemma

The alliance security dilemma hypothesis, also drawn from balance-of-power theory, focuses on intra-alliance threats rather than external threats. Alliance cohesion is explained as a function of the coercive capabilities of the stronger alliance leader to exact cooperation from the weaker members. If the weaker states choose to support the alliance leader, they face possible "entrapment" in both the positive and negative aspects of the alliance leaders decisions. If they choose to withdraw support (or pursue alternative policies -- to defect), they risk "abandonment" by the alliance leader.

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Kupchan refers to Glenn Snyder's "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics" and Kenneth Waltz's Theory of International Politics ("Structural causes and military effects") for the formulation of this hypothesis. According to Snyder, once states

Alliance Policy in the Cold War, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1959), p. 193; Ernst B. Haas and Allen S. Whiting, Dynamics of International Relations, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1956), p. 167; K.J. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 116; Kenneth Boulding, Conflict and Defense: A General Theory, (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 162; Amitai Etzioni, Political Unification: A Comparative Study of Leaders and Forces, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965), pp. 30-31; Robert C. North, H.E. Koch, and Dina A. Zinnes, "The Integrative Functions of Conflict," Journal of Conflict Resolution, 4, 1960, p. 367; Arnold Wolfers, "Stresses and Strains of Going It With Others," in Arnold Wolfers, ed., Alliance Policy in the Cold War, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press), 1959, p. 3.

32

Kupchan, p. 325.

have formed alliances, they move into a phase characterized by a decision-making process that is no longer concerned with whether or not to ally in the first place, but rather how firmly to commit themselves to the alliance (and the alliance leader) and how much support to give that partner in the event of a confrontation with an adversary. The so-called proverbial horns of this dilemma can be characterized by the traditional labels "cooperate" and "defect" where "cooperation means a strong general commitment and full support in specific adversary conflicts, and defection means a weak commitment and no support in conflicts with the adversary."

33

Rousseau's "Stag Hunt" has been used by theorists of international relations to illustrate the dilemma raised by the choice between cooperation and defection. In short, if the men in the hunt cooperate to trap the stag, they will all eat well. However, if one hunter decides to defect and chase a rabbit (which he prefers to eat over stag), then none of the remaining hunters will get anything. Thus, as Robert Jervis points out by placing this illustration in an international political context, all actors have the same preference order and there is a solution that gives each his first choice:

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Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," World Politics 36, July 1984, p. 466. As Snyder points out, the concept of the security dilemma was originated by John H. Herz who maintained that the "security power dilemma" is

(1) Cooperate and trap the stag (the international analogue being cooperation and disarmament); (2) chase a rabbit while others remain at their posts (maintain a high level of arms while others are disarmed); (3) all chase rabbits (arms competition and high risk of war); and (4) stay at the original position while another chases a rabbit (being disarmed while others are armed).³⁴

Jervis is quick to qualify this line of reasoning, however, by noting that even when there is a solution that is everyone's first choice, the international case is characterized by several problems not present in the case of the Stag Hunt. The principle reason lies at the heart of the security dilemma: "Many of the means by which a state tries to increase its security decrease the security of others."³⁵ In other words, in international politics

a fundamental condition which underlies all social and political phenomena that face individuals and groups in society:

Politically active groups and individuals are concerned about their security from being attacked, subjected, dominated, or annihilated by other groups and individuals. Because they strive to attain security from such attack, and yet can never feel entirely secure in a world of competing units, they are driven toward acquiring more and more power for themselves, in order to escape the impact of the superior power of others. It is important to realize that such competition for security, and hence for power, is a basic situation which is unique with men and their social groups.

For detailed information see: John H. Herz, Political Realism and Political Idealism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 14.

34

Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," World Politics 30, January 1978, p. 167.

35

Ibid., p. 168.

one state's gain in enhancing its own security is often (and inadvertently) accomplished at the expense of others.

Each horn of this dilemma carries with it both prospective good and prospective bad consequences. In the alliance security dilemma proposition the prospective bad consequences are "abandonment" and "entrapment" while the prospective good consequences are a reduction of the risks of being abandoned or entrapped by the alliance leader.³⁶

As Kupchan quite clearly points out:

The notion of "entrapment" usually refers to involvement in unwanted conflict or the assumption of what are perceived as unnecessary and excessive defense responsibilities. "Abandonment," in its extreme form, refers to realignment and the breaking of defense commitments, but it may also take more moderate forms, such as the alliance leader moving closer to the adversary, imposing sanctions on its weaker allies, or ignoring the interests of small powers in the designation of alliance policy and strategy.³⁷

The alliance security dilemma, according to Snyder, is mostly a function of tension between the risk of abandonment and the risk of entrapment: reducing one tends to increase the other. In a bipolar alliance, such as NATO, the risk of entrapment is normally dealt with simply by disassociation from the ally's policy or by various methods of restraining

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Snyder, p. 466. Snyder credits Michael Mandelbaum as having first posited the concepts of abandonment and entrapment. For more information see Mandelbaum's The Nuclear Revolution: International Politics Before and After Hiroshima (New York:Cambridge University Press, 1981), specifically Chapter 6.

37

Kupchan, p. 325.

the ally without concern that the ally may defect or the alliance leader might abandon the ally as a consequence. The two classic cases of this phenomenon remain the withholding of support and the application of economic pressure by the alliance leader, the United States, during the Suez crisis of 1956 and the weaker allies failure to support (and even hinder) the alliance leaders efforts to resupply Israel during the Yom Kippur War.³⁸

Within the NATO context, the European allies are primarily concerned about entrapment in that "U.S. bellicosity might set off a severe insecurity spiral with the Soviet Union, which could explode into crisis or violence."³⁹ More specifically, Europeans harbor the fear of out-of-area entrapment -- that is, being engulfed in a superpower conflict ignited by an American overreaction to Soviet advances in regions outside the traditional confines of Europe. Therefore,

the alliance dilemma for the European allies is how to escape or minimize these risks of entrapment without seriously risking some form of partial U.S. abandonment. The latter might consist of troop withdrawals, American downgrading of the priority of European defense in favor of other areas such as the Persian Gulf, or a further drift toward unilateralism.⁴⁰

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Snyder, pp. 484-485.

39

Ibid., p. 491.

40

Ibid.

As demonstrated later in this study, this is precisely the dilemma the European allies found themselves locked into at the outset of the Persian Gulf crisis.

Kenneth Waltz approaches the alliance security dilemma from a slightly different perspective by positing that in an alliance among equals, the defection of one member threatens the security of the remaining members. But in alliances among unequals, "the contributions of the lesser members are at once wanted and of relatively small importance."⁴¹ In other words:

Where the contributions of a number of parties are highly important to all of them, each has strong incentive both to persuade others to its views about strategy and tactics and to make concessions when persuasion fails. The unity of major partners is likely to endure because they all understand how much they depend on it.⁴²

According to Waltz, in both bipolar and multipolar systems, alliance leaders attempt to extract maximum contributions from their respective members. However, in a multipolar world, nations will often pool their resources in order to serve their interests. Furthermore, alliance members of roughly equal stature who find themselves engaged in cooperative endeavors must strive for a "common denominator" of their policies. Within a multipolar system

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Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading, Ma: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1979), p. 168.

42

Ibid.

they always run the risk of finding the lowest common denominator thereby ending up in the worst of all possible situations.⁴³

On the other hand, Waltz contends that in a bipolar system (NATO vs. Warsaw Pact), alliance leaders formulate strategies and tactics according to their own national interests. In other words, strategies can be devised that offset the main antagonist with little reference to the need to satisfy the interests of one's lesser allies. In short, "alliance leaders are free to follow their own line, which may of course reflect their bad as well as their good judgment, their imaginary as well as their worthy ends."⁴⁴ In no case, of course, are alliance leaders totally free of constraints -- but the major constraints on the courses of action available to an alliance leader normally occur as a result of an action from the main adversary and not from one's own allies.⁴⁵

In summary, it is safe to conclude that the alliance security dilemma is more severe in a multipolar than in a bipolar system primarily because "high mutual dependence coexists with

⁴³
Ibid., p. 169.

⁴⁴
Ibid., p. 170.

⁴⁵
Ibid.

plausible realignment options." As Snyder confirms:

Conciliating the adversary, or weakening one's support of the ally to guard against entrapment, are both constrained by fears of abandonment. But attempts to ensure against abandonment by supporting the ally and avoiding accommodation with the opponent⁴⁷ increase the risk of entrapment; hence the dilemma.

Likewise, the mutual fear of abandonment in a multipolar system tends to promote convergence of policy which is normally measured in terms of mutual support and firmness toward an adversary. In the multipolar system, as Snyder maintains, abandonment worries outweigh entrapment fears.

This is not the case in a bipolar system, such as NATO, because the risks of total abandonment are low. In fact, in such a system, the allies may adopt independent (and at times contradictory) policies toward the adversary with little if any fear that the partner will defect as a consequence of those independent policies. Therefore the tendency in a bipolar system is toward a divergence rather than a convergence of policy. This condition is a direct result of the nature of the bipolar structure of the system -- the alliance [NATO] cannot disintegrate or even change until the structure itself changes:

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Snyder, p. 494.

47

Ibid.

This structural guarantee against disintegration encourages unilateralism and inhibits compromise. Policy conflict may not be resolved because the cost of not resolving them does not include a risk to the alliance itself.⁴⁸

Conversely, the structural instability of multipolar alliances tend -- because they could disintegrate -- to promote a convergence of policy among their respective members.⁴⁹

It should be remembered, however, that alliance cohesion, regardless of the prevailing system, remains a function of the coercive capabilities of the alliance leader (or stronger bloc) to exact cooperative behavior from the weaker members. If the weaker states choose to support the alliance leader, they face possible "entrapment" in both the positive and negative aspects of the alliance leaders decisions. If they choose to withdraw support (or pursue alternative policies -- to defect), they risk "abandonment" by the alliance leader.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 495.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Kupchan, p. 324. For additional information on the derivation of the alliance security dilemma, the reader is referred to the following seminal studies on alliance cohesion theory: John H. Herz, Political Realism and Political Idealism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 3-16; Ole R. Holsti, et al., Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1973), especially Chapter 5, "National Attributes, Bloc Structure and Intra-Alliance Conflict"; Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading,

Collective Action

The collective action hypothesis proposes that the willingness of the alliance leader to bear the heaviest burden of the costs of collective security leads to alliance cohesion. Conversely, a decline in the leader's willingness or ability to carry the heaviest load should lead to alliance discord. As the dominate alliance leader applies pressure to the less powerful members to contribute more to the collective good, the "smaller powers derive less benefit from participation in the alliance and are less willing to play a subordinate political role." ⁵¹ This, in turn, leads to noncooperative behavior. This proposition assumes that weaker powers contribute less (over time) than their proportionate share of the defense burden because they "free

MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1979), Chapter 8, especially pp. 163-170; Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 62-76; George Liska, Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), Chapter 2, "The Cohesion of Alliances"; for information on the concept of "defection" in alliances see: Robert Axelrod, Conflict of Interest (Chicago: Markham, 1970), pp. 66-70; Anatol Rapaport and Albert Chammah, Prisoner's Dilemma (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), pp. 33-50; Robert Axelrod, "More Effective Choice in the Prisoner's Dilemma," The Journal of Conflict Resolution, September 1980, pp. 379-403; and James Tedeschi, Barry Schlenker and Thomas Bonoma, Conflict, Power and Games (Chicago: Aldine, 1973), pp. 135-141. For additional information on the concept of cooperation in alliance cohesion theory see: Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," World Politics 30, January 1983, especially pp. 170-174, pp. 176-178, and 179-183.

ride" on the alliance leader. However, this hypothesis predicts that smaller powers should increase their share of the burden when the share provided by the alliance leader declines. In other words, they [smaller powers] will increase their share of the burden when they are forced to rely on their own defense resources.

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While the basic argument for this hypothesis was first formulated by Charles P. Kindleberger in his The World in Depression 1929-1938, the central thesis for this proposition is drawn from Robert Keohane's general proposition called "Hegemonic Stability Theory." Two major tenets remain central to Keohane's theory: First,

that order in world politics is typically created by a single dominant power. Since regimes constitute elements of an international order, this implies that the formation of international regimes normally depends on hegemony. The other major tenet of the theory of hegemonic stability is that the maintenance of order requires continued hegemony.⁵³

This assertion implies that cooperation, defined as mutual adjustment of state policies to one another, also depends on the continuation of hegemony. Kindleberger, in perhaps the most

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Ibid., p. 326.

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Robert O. Keohane, After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 31. For an indepth analysis and evaluation of the "hegemonic stability theory" see Keohane's "The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in International Economic Regimes," in Ole Holsti et al., Changes in the International System (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), pp. 131-162.

straightforward expression of this sentiment, flatly states
"that for the world economy to be stabilized, there has to
be a stabilizer, one stabilizer."⁵⁴

Keohane points out that the hegemon is generally more
willing to enter into agreements which require it to make
initial sacrifices in order to ensure future gains. The
hegemon willingly enters into such agreements only because
it expects to have a major stake in and control over the
behavior of its lesser partners in the long term. In other
words and simply put: the hegemon can make life quite
difficult for its lesser partners if they fail to live up to
their individual or collective obligations.⁵⁵

On the other hand, the smaller states know that the
hegemon is likely to enforce a broad set of rules and
responsibilities. These states may therefore be willing, as
Keohane contends, "to deal both with the hegemon -- because,
to the rule-maintainer, precedents and reputation are so
important that cheating and double-crossing strategies are
costly -- and with other countries, since these states may
be kept in line by the dominant power."⁵⁶ Thus hegemony

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Charles P. Kindleberger, The World in Depression
1929-1939 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973),
p. 305.

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Keohane, After Hegemony, p. 180.

56

Ibid.

provides the alliance with standards for conduct, information about other member's likely patterns of behavior, and ways of providing incentives to states to comply with the hegemon's rules. According to Keohane, these effects of hegemony are much easier to construct than trying to create stability and cohesion through the laborious process associated with multi-lateral international regimes.⁵⁷

However, in a follow-on study to his original hegemonic stability thesis, Keohane, in his After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy, concludes that the crude theory is only partially valid. His "first cut" at the problem pointed to the importance of material power in achieving cooperation but it did not provide a general causal explanation of the changes taking place in the post-hegemonic international order of the 1970's and 1980's. Keohane points to the evolving role of international regimes for clues in finding an explanation for these changes in the international system:

Cooperation seems also to depend on expectations, on transaction costs, and on uncertainty, all of which can be affected by international regimes. Despite the erosion of American hegemony, discord has not triumphed over cooperation; instead, they coexist.⁵⁸

57

Ibid., p. 181.

58

Ibid., p. 184.

In the final analysis, Keohane concedes that the hegemonic stability theory, like realist theory, "provides a useful, parsimonious basis on which to begin analysis" but it does not provide an adequate explanation of the evolution⁵⁹ of the postwar international economic order.

Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser have written perhaps the seminal study on applying the concept of collective action to alliance cohesion theory. In their article "An Economic Theory of Alliances," they attempt to develop an empirical model which explains the inner workings of international organizations and then test that model against the experience of some existing international institutions -- namely NATO.

Prior to conducting their analysis, however, the authors deem it necessary to set the analytical stage by asking whether or not the different-sized contributions of different countries within an alliance can be explained in terms of national interest. For example, why would it be in the interest of some countries (like the United States) to contribute a larger portion of their total resources to group undertakings in other countries? And why do NATO nations fail to provide the level of forces that they themselves describe as appropriate and in their own national interest? The author's, quite correctly, point out that

these questions, while central to collective action theory, cannot be answered without "developing a logical explanation of how much a nation's acting in its national interest will contribute to an international organization."⁶⁰

Thus any attempt to build a theory of alliance cohesion must, as Mancur and Zechauser point out, begin with the purposes or functions of these international organizations. One function that all alliances must have is that of serving the common interest of its member states:

In the case of NATO, the proclaimed purpose of the alliance is to protect the member nations from aggression by a common enemy. Deterring aggression against any one of the members is supposed to be in the interest of all. The analogy with a nation-state is obvious. Those goods and services, such as defense, that the government provides in the common interest of the citizenry, are usually called "public goods." An organization of states allied for defense similarly produces a public good, only in this case the "public" -- the members of the organization -- are states rather than individuals.⁶¹

Collective or public goods share common objectives and have one or both of the following properties: First, if the common objective is in fact achieved, then everyone who shares in achieving this goal automatically benefits. In other words, "non-purchasers" cannot be kept from consuming the good. And

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Mancur Olson and Richard Zechauser, "An Economic Theory of Alliances," in Bruce M. Russett, ed., Economic Theories of International Politics (Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1968), p. 26.

61

Ibid.

second, if the collective good is made available to the other members of the alliance, then that good is made available to the others at little or marginal cost.⁶²

It therefore follows that since the benefits of any action taken by an individual group member to provide a public good goes to all members, individual members, acting independently, do not have an incentive to provide "optimal amounts of such goods."⁶³ The author's cite examples of states exacting taxes and labor unions demanding compulsory membership as illustrative of this phenomenon. That is, when the group interested in a particular public good is large and the share that goes to any one individual is small, the tendency is for the individual group

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Ibid., p. 27. For additional information on public goods and the theory of groups see: J.G. Head, "Public Goods and Public Policy," Public Finance, XVII, 3, 1962, pp. 197-219; Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965); Stephen N. Brown, David Price and Satish Raichur, "Public-Good Theory and Bargaining Between Large and Small Countries," International Studies Quarterly, September 1976, pp. 393-414; Joseph Oppenheimer, "Collective Goods and Alliances: A Reassessment," The Journal of Conflict Resolution, September 1979, pp. 387-407; and Todd Sandler, Jon Cauley and John F. Forbes, "In Defense of a Collective Goods Theory of Alliances," The Journal of Conflict Resolution, September 1980, pp. 537-547; Wallace J. Thies, "Alliances and Collective Goods: A Reappraisal," The Journal of Conflict Resolution, June 1987, pp. 298-332; Amnon Rapoport and Gary Bronstein, "Public Good Problems in Competition Between Equal and Unequal Groups," The Journal of Conflict Resolution, September 1989; Mark A. Boyer, "Trading Public Goods in the Western Alliance System," The Journal of Conflict Resolution, December 1989, pp. 700-727.

63

Olson and Zechauser, p. 27.

member not to voluntarily purchase a share of the good. Olson and Zechauser sum up their thesis by stating the following proposition:

When -- as in any organization representing a limited number of nation-states -- the membership of an organization is relatively small, the individual members may have an incentive to make significant sacrifices to obtain the collective good, but they will tend to provide only suboptimal amounts of this good. There will also be a tendency for the "larger" members -- those that place a higher absolute value on the public good -- to bear a disproportionate share of the burden.⁶⁴

In summary, the collective action hypothesis presupposes that it is in the national interest of the alliance leader to provide the larger share of the public good and that the smaller members of the alliance are willing to cooperate as long as they continue to benefit from the alliance leader's determination and ability to provide the public good of collective security.⁶⁵ While Keohane's hegemonic stability theory deals with economic regimes, the central tenet of his thesis posits that a decline in the dominant power's ability and willingness to provide the public good (security in the case of NATO) should precipitate a rise in intra-alliance tension and discord. As the dominant power places additional pressure on the smaller states to contribute more to the collective

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Ibid., p. 28.

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Kupchan, p. 325.

good, the smaller states begin to derive a smaller portion of the overall benefit from membership in the alliance and therefore are "less willing to play a subordinate political role."⁶⁶

However, if cooperation is measured in terms of the economic contribution of the smaller states to the overall output of defense related goods, then, as Kupchan points out, the collective action hypothesis suggests the opposite prediction:

Small powers should increase their level of contribution to defense capability when the level provided by the dominant power declines. There should be a negative correlation between the contribution of the latter and that of the former. The hypothesis is based on the assumption that smaller powers consistently contribute less than their proportionate share of the collective good (security) produced by the alliance because they "free ride" on the dominant power.⁶⁷

In other words, the smaller powers have little incentive to make additional contributions (like raising defense expenditures) because the dominant power or hegemon makes provisions for their defense requirements. For the alliance leader, the strategic pay-offs of this relationship outweigh the economic costs. However, when the alliance leader decides, for political or economic reasons, to decrease its share of the collective good, the smaller powers are forced

⁶⁶
Ibid.

⁶⁷
Ibid., p. 326.

to "pick-up the slack." When the smaller powers are forced to rely on their own resources as a result of such action by the hegemon, they will increase defense expenditures⁶⁸ accordingly.

Domestic Politics

The domestic politics hypothesis asserts that allies cooperate when tangible public support is present or when the political leadership (in democratic societies) perceives there is an "electoral advantage in tightening alliance relations or raising defense spending."⁶⁹ Conversely, alliances are less cohesive when public support is lacking or when domestic political (or economic) constraints preclude a stronger commitment to a more equitable sharing of the defense burden.

The relevant literature on the impact domestic politics has on alliance cohesion includes a fairly large number of propositions suggesting alliance policies reflect domestic needs. In fact, K.J. Holsti suggests that a nation's⁷⁰ alliance strategies are closely linked to domestic needs. Similarly, Ole Holsti identifies three primary areas in

⁶⁸
Ibid.

⁶⁹
Ibid.

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K.J. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 110

which national attributes or domestic politics play a vital role in the formation of alliance policies: the stability of the top leadership, the socialization of political elites, and certain characteristics of open and closed polities. Holsti is careful to point out, however, that these are limited areas bordering on speculative and illustrative rather than comprehensive and exact. But they do provide a firm foundation upon which to begin analysis.⁷¹

The literature dealing with the stability of the top leadership, by implication, also deals with the stability of the domestic regime itself. These propositions suggest that a leadership group faced with internal domestic turmoil may actually court allies in the hope of securing external support for a collapsing domestic regime. In this respect, George Liska posits that the greater the internal difficulties within a non-aligned state, the greater the incentive to move beyond non-alignment to militant neutralism.⁷² Ole Holsti asserts that domestic instability is the national attribute most often associated with alliance disintegration.⁷³ Liska expands this proposition by asserting that the most straightforward cause of alliance

⁷¹ Ole Holsti, et al., p. 152.

⁷² Liska, p. 214.

⁷³ Ole Holsti, et al., p. 31.

disintegration is domestic instability producing radical
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change in the governing elite.

The literature (and propositions) on alliance cohesion
often focus on the political attributes of the alliance
leader and hold that cohesion depends upon stable leadership
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within the alliance leader's nation. Changes in national
leadership may result in a re-evaluation of alliance goals,
strategy, and tactics. Indeed, Holsti and company flatly
assert that "the more regime instability experienced by one
or more members of the alliance, the more the alliance will
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experience problems of performance." Since domestic
politics cannot be divorced from foreign policy, as Holsti
contends, it therefore stands to reason that regime
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stability will have an impact on alliance performance.
The jury remains out, however, on whether or not that impact
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will be favorable.

74
Liska, p. 103.

75
Ibid., p. 93.

76
Ole Holsti, et al., p. 55.

77
Ibid., p. 64.

78
For example, Jacob and Teune assert that governmental
ineffectiveness associated with unstable leadership may in
fact provide added incentives for seeking larger "units of
community." For more information on this process see:
Phillip E. Jacob and Henry Teune, "The Integrative Process:
Guidelines for Analysis of the Bases of Political

To demonstrate, dramatically, the effect socialization of political elites has on alliance cohesion, Holsti and company examine the alliance experiences of French and Chinese leaders -- namely Mao and DeGaulle. Suffice it to say, and for the purposes of this brief survey, both leaders were intensely nationalistic and were "convinced that their vision of history gave them exceptional insight into the features of the politically relevant future."⁷⁹ Like statesman in other countries who have "successfully" challenged their alliance leaders (for example, Tito in Yugoslavia), Mao and DeGaulle, as Holsti points out, owed their positions to national, domestic, and personal factors⁸⁰ rather than to the intervention of their allies.

Holsti and company also link the nature of the political system -- pluralistic or authoritarian -- to differences in alliance policy. Since this analysis deals with NATO's cooperative efforts to address Persian Gulf security, this portion of the survey focuses only on the aspects of the open polity inherent in pluralistic systems. The hypothesis developed by Holsti is stated and framed in

Community," in Phillip E. Jacob and James V. Toscano, eds., The Integration of Political Communities (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1964).

79
Ole Holsti, et al., p. 152.

80
Ibid., p. 153.

terms of the identifiable link to the nature of a pluralistic system:

Nonconforming alliance policies of an open polity tend to remain confined to a few issue-areas; that is, there is little tendency for disputes to spill over into all issue-areas.⁸¹

In other words, this proposition is derived from the perspective that foreign policy elites, in a pluralistic system, operate within a decision-making process marked by significant constraints against abrupt and complete changes in policy:

These include multiple internal and external channels of communication, relative freedom for divergent interests to make political demands, and a limited ability of top leaders to mobilize all politically relevant groups and institutions in support of their policies.⁸²

More recent literature on the domestic politics component in alliance theory tend to focus on the specific role public opinion plays in the development of viable national security policies within an alliance framework. As one analyst succinctly stated" "A viable security policy

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Ibid., p. 160.

82

Ibid. For additional information on these broad domestic politics propositions see: Ole Holsti's Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances, pp. 10-14, 31, 54-56, 60-84, 151-165 and Annex C for specific propositions on the impact of domestic politics on alliances; George Liska's Nations in Alliance, especially Chapter 3, "The Efficacy of Alliances"; and for an indepth analysis of the effect elitism has on alliances see: Amitai Etzioni's Political Unification, pp. 45-47, 68-71, and for specific propositions see pp. 94-96.

requires not only the capability to organize and to maintain the military prerequisites for deterrence and defense, but also a degree of social acceptance of these measures."⁸³

Moreover, and with specific reference to NATO, today's increasingly interdependent world creates a situation in which domestic political factors are becoming more and more intertwined with external policies:

The transmission of information and the conduct of intra-allied debate over policy is less and less confined to diplomatic channels and communication among top political leaders. The speed with which information is available to all Western publics simultaneously creates new and more direct interactions between the different political cultures existing in alliance member states.⁸⁴

Concerning the degree of domestic consensus within each alliance member, various researchers and theorists point out the need to distinguish the level of agreement between governmental elites and public opinion and the level of agreement within the public. Several analysts have concluded that, despite the many crises of cohesion plagueing the Alliance, the elite-public consensus on security issues remains quite strong. In fact, a clear

83

Gregory Flynn and Hans Rattinger, eds., The Public and Atlantic Defense (Totawa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld, 1985), p. 1.

84

Ibid., p. 387.

division between European public opinion and the governing
elites occurs only on the nuclear weapons issue.⁸⁵

However, less onerous domestic divisions do take place. These cleavages within the European domestic political arena are normally, as demonstrated later in this study, split down party lines and, in some instances, compounded by generational divisions. Based on Europe's historical tradition of ideological differences on security matters, most analysts would conclude that this phenomenon is neither new nor even surprising.⁸⁶ Likewise, the so-called simplistic concepts of neutralism and pacifism as well as "single-factor" theories such as generational change do not, according to many analysts, provide sufficient explanations for the pattern of domestic divisions within NATO on security matters.⁸⁷

Researchers have found that it is the very complexity of the divisions themselves that complicate policy coordination within the Alliance. They contend that public opinion profiles vary in two specific ways:

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William Domke, Richard Eichenberg, and Catherine Kelleher, "Consensus Lost? Domestic Politics and the 'Crisis' in NATO," World Politics 39, Spring 1987, p. 404.

86

Ibid.

87

Ibid., p. 405.

First, opinions are not uniform across countries. In some there are deep divisions on security issues while in others these are less severe. Second, the nature of opinion cleavages varies; in all the countries, there is evidence of partisan cleavage, but in some it is complicated by generational differences.⁸⁸

Coordination of policy is further compounded by the differences in political institutions and changing domestic conditions (social and economic) that tend to influence public opinion. For example, the rate of economic growth within a specific Alliance country has a direct relationship to the general consensus against raising defense budgets at the expense of social programs: strong economies tend to break down this consensus and defense spending increases; weak economies, on the other hand, tend to solidify this consensus and a greater share of scarce resources are then allocated for social rather than defense related programs.⁸⁹

Given this background, it is safe to conclude that the degree of commitment to an alliance depends upon the national domestic unities of its members.⁹⁰ In other words,

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Ibid.

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Ibid., p. 406. For European governments, as Domke et al. point out, the best outlook would be the avoidance of these tradeoffs through rates of economic growth strong enough to allow relatively modest increases in defense outlays without impacting adversely on social programs. Most European governments during the 1970's actually increased defense spending (in real terms) without incurring the wrath of the electorate at the ballot box.

90

Michael D. Ward, Research Gaps in Alliance Dynamics, Monograph Series in World Affairs, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Denver: Colorado Seminary, University of Denver, 1982), p. 76.

"the military, economic and political postures in an alliance are constrained to a greater or lesser degree by the internal requirements of each particular member."⁹¹

This proposition reflects the need, particularly on behalf of the Alliance leader, to be intimately familiar and up-to-date on the status of an ally's domestic political parties, their political leaders and the coalition politics they are involved in so that overall alliance policy can be better coordinated. The affect which electoral politics, governing elite perceptions, public opinion, and regional collaboration and conflict each may have on alliance cohesion should be factored into a comprehensive approach to coordinating alliance policy and strategy.⁹²

In summary, and for the purposes of this study, the domestic politics hypothesis maintains that allies cooperate when tangible public support is present or when the political elites perceive there is an electoral gain to be made in shoring-up intra-alliance relations or even increasing defense expenditures. Likewise, alliances are less cohesive when public support is lacking or when domestic constraints preclude a stronger commitment to a

⁹¹
Ibid.

⁹²
Ibid., p. 60.

more equitable sharing of the defense burden.

Summary

The preceding summary of the relevant alliance cohesion literature and theory provides the foundation upon which the analysis in the following chapter is based. An overview of the findings in the preceding approach to alliance cohesion theory by no means rules out the formulation of an alternate

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Kupchan, p. 326. For more information on the theoretical aspects of public opinion and foreign policy in general see: Milton J. Rosenberg and Carl I. Hovland, "Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral Components of Attitudes," in M.J. Rosenberg et al., eds., Attitude Organization and Change (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), pp. 1-14; James N. Rosenau, Public Opinion and Foreign Policy (New York: Random House, 1961); Barry B. Hughes The Domestic Context of American Foreign Policy (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1978); Michael Mandelbaum and William Schneider, "The New Internationalists: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy," in Kenneth Oye, et al., eds., Eagle Entangled: US Foreign Policy in a Complex World (New York: Longman, 1979); Ronald H. Hinckley, "Public Attitudes Toward Key Foreign Policy Events, The Journal of Conflict Resolution, June 1988, pp. 295-318; Robert Y. Shapiro and Benjamin I. Page, "Foreign Policy and the Rational Public," The Journal of Conflict Resolution, June 1988, pp. 211-247; and Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau, "The Domestic and Foreign Policy Beliefs of American Leaders," The Journal of Conflict Resolution, June 1988, pp. 248-294. For an outstanding and more specific examination of the integration of the methodology of opinion analysis of security issues in Western Europe see: Richard C. Eichenberg, Public Opinion and National Security in Western Europe (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) and Michael Howard, "Deterrence, Consensus and Reassurance in the Defense of Europe," in Defense and Consensus: The Domestic Aspects of Western Security Adelphi Paper No. 184 (London: IISS, 1983), pp. 17-27. For a six nation study on West European public opinion and the NATO alliance see: Gregory Flynn and Hans Rattinger, eds., The Public and Atlantic Defense (London: Rowman and Allanheld, 1985).

set of propositions by which to analyze allied cooperation in the Persian Gulf nor does it lay claim to the validity of one set of hypotheses over another. Indeed, in their comprehensive empirical study, Holsti and company examined over 130 alliances formed during the span of more than a century and found that the evidence for these propositions is, at best, mixed.

For example, one of the researcher's major findings was the stark contrast in the number of correlations of independent variables between the nature and performance of the alliances formed during the period between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the outbreak of World War II in 1939 and the post-war bipolar alliance system. The independent variables selected by the researcher's -- ideology, political stability (and instability), geographical dispersion, size, goals, and international conflict -- remain among the most prominent in the alliance cohesion literature.⁹⁴ However, as Holsti and company have demonstrated, the most striking factor in their analysis was the consistency of low correlations of these variables with the nature and performance of the alliance systems examined prior to 1939 and the relatively high correlation between theory and data to the post-war alliance system.⁹⁵ Hence

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Holsti, et al., p. 219.

⁹⁵
Ibid.

their data supports the general proposition that the structure of the international system has a dramatic impact on and influence over the nature and performance of the prevailing alliance system.

It is from this perspective, the structure of the international system, that the alliance cohesion propositions outlined in the preceding summary will be applied to the case study. Moreover, these hypotheses are designed primarily to serve as an analytical framework within which to organize the research data, frame the proper research questions, and systematically analyze and evaluate the research problem. Given this background and framework, it is now possible to apply these four applicable hypotheses to the case study to determine why a political agreement and its subsequent transformation into an operational agreement emerged and its impact on U.S. Persian Gulf policy.

CHAPTER VII

ENDS VERSUS MEANS: ALLIED COOPERATION ANALYSIS

With their internal relations Great Britain . . . would have been foolish to interfere. All that she took upon herself was to secure the maritime peace of the Gulf . . . that object has been secured. Trade is prosecuted in these waters with an immunity and security which, under any other regime would have been impossible . . . hundreds of thousands of human beings are secured by the British Protectorate of the Persian Gulf . . . were it either withdrawn or destroyed both sea and shores would relapse into . . . anarchical chaos.

G.N. Curzon, 1892

It remains our intention to withdraw British forces from the Persian Gulf by the end of 1971.

British Ministry of Defence, 1968

. . . there have been over 200 confirmed attacks against merchant ships . . . most vessels have no form of naval protection available to them in the Gulf.¹

Adrian Swire, 1987

Background

"Naturally," the eminent British naval historian James Cable recently wrote, "it is tempting to say that Curzon was right, to sketch the course of events -- First a trickle,

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G.N. Curzon, Persia and the Persian Question (London: Longmans Green & Co, 1892), Vol. II, pp. 451 & 464; Statement on the Defence Estimates 1970 (London: HMSO) Cmnd 4290, p. 4; and Adrian Swire, "Merchant Shipping and the Gulf War" in Naval Forces No. III/1987, Vol. VIII as quoted in James Cable, "Outside Navies in the Gulf," International Relations, May 1988, p. 228.

then a torrent -- which bore out, in less than a decade, the warning he had uttered eighty years earlier." The change that Curzon predicted, however, has been much more complex and violent than he expected. The killing fields found along the Iran-Iraq border, eerily reminiscent of the trench fighting of World War I, have revealed the deaths of over a million people and the use of lethal and exotic weaponry such as mustard and nerve gas and ballistic missiles.

Nor could Curzon have foreseen the level at which this violence would spill over into the treacherous and restricted waters of the Persian Gulf. From indiscriminate small boat attacks to the use of Exocet missiles, the tanker war became just as vicious as the war on land. Ironically, Curzon's latter-day prediction regarding a relapse into anarchical chaos and Adrian Swire's recent observation regarding the lack of naval protection for merchant ships, provides pundits from both sides of the issue with enough ammunition to buttress an argument either for or against the establishment of some form of multi-national naval protection for merchant ships plying the war-torn waters of the Gulf.

Regardless of one's position on the causes of the violence in the once peaceful waters of the Gulf and the subsequent requirement for naval protection, the fact remains that a political agreement and its transformation into an operational agreement did emerge under the auspices

of the Western European Union. The question remains why and how did such an agreement emerge? This portion of the analysis will focus on this question by examining the factors that determine intra-alliance cooperative and noncooperative behavior. Moreover, this examination centers on the allies' specific efforts to address Persian Gulf security issues as they pertained to the U.S. decision to reflag eleven Kuwaiti oil tankers.

Organization

This chapter is organized on a topical basis. The first section briefly outlines the evolution of NATO policy toward Southwest Asia and identifies examples of both cooperative and noncooperative behavior. The second section reviews the four central hypotheses that seek to explain intra-alliance behavior outlined in the previous chapter. These hypotheses are derived from both systemic and domestic models of international politics. As previously noted, Kupchan categorizes these hypotheses as follows:

The external threat hypothesis suggests that alliance cohesion rises and falls with the external threats to collective security. The alliance security dilemma hypothesis proposes that cohesion is a function of the coercive potential of the alliance leader and its ability to exact cooperative behavior from its weaker partners. The collective action hypothesis suggests that alliance behavior is fundamentally a public goods problem. The domestic politics hypothesis asserts that alliance behavior is determined primarily by political and economic factors at the domestic level.²

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Kupchan, pp. 312-318.

The third section tests these hypotheses against the reflagging case study to determine which one (or combinations thereof) best explains the behavior that eventually led to allied cooperation in the Persian Gulf. In the final section, some general conclusions are drawn regarding the sources of alliance cohesion and the forecasting capability of these alliance cooperation propositions. Admittedly, the theoretical scope of this study is limited, primarily due to the concentration on one case study. However, the purpose of this study is simply to attempt to formulate causal statements pertaining to the sources of cooperative and noncooperative behavior within the confines of the Persian Gulf case study. The following analysis suggests that the ultimate political and operational agreement reached by the alliance members was the direct result of altered threat perceptions coupled with the application of coercive pressure by the alliance leader. The study clearly delineates elements of the external threat and alliance security dilemma hypotheses merging together to effect a shift in the sovereign yet collective European position.

The Evolution of NATO'S Southwest Asia Policy

The March 1987 decisions by the United States to reflag 11 Kuwaiti tankers and the follow-on request for allied cooperation in augmenting U.S. naval forces in the Gulf, have reopened the perennial debate over NATO's enduring out-

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of-area problem. Article Six of the North Atlantic Treaty restricts the Organization to the defense of territories of the member states in Europe and North America, and the seas and islands north of the Tropic of

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Cancer. While many alliance members have maintained (at times extensive) interests "out-of-area," rarely has there been a mechanism by which these interests could be integrated into a comprehensive, permanent, and collaborative military framework. This is a direct result of differences in overseas interests of individual alliance members. For example, containment of the Soviet military threat has always been the primordial and galvanizing interest of all the alliance members. However, in out-of-area matters, the nature, scale and threshold of interests varies with each member. The United States, by virtue of

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For a detailed historical background on the NATO out of area debate see: Charles A. Kupchan. The Persian Gulf and the West - The Dilemmas of Security (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987; specifically Chapters 7 and 8).

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As Kupchan points out, the purpose of Article Six was not to preclude combined operations outside the confines of the formal treaty area but rather "to ensure that an attack on colonial territories not be automatically considered as an attack on the alliance as such." For further information see: Theodore Achilles, "U.S. Role in Negotiations That Led to the Atlantic Alliance." NATO Review 5, October 1983, p. 17.

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Simon Davis and Bruce George, "Europe, The United States, The Gulf War, and NATO's Enduring Out of Area Problem," in Robert Reed and Roger Weissinger-Baylon, eds., Out of Area Crises and The Atlantic Alliance, (Menlo Park, CA: Center for Strategic Decision Research, 1989), p. 70.

its superpower status, is more concerned with geostrategic issues requiring political and military influence in many regions of the world. Immediate post-war containment of the Soviet threat was pursued through military assistance and economic development programs which tended to replace European influence or accelerate the withdrawal of that influence from post-colonial regions like Southeast Asia and the Middle East. This decline of British power in the Middle East and Africa and the collapse of French colonialism in Southeast Asia and North Africa "witnessed a corresponding growth in American development and assistance schemes with the successor regimes"⁶ . In short,

The intention was to erect a pro-Western set of durable alternatives to the forces of radical Third World nationalism which, in the fifties and sixties, seemed increasingly sympathetic to Soviet and Chinese auspices. This would involve building states along the lines of prevailing "development" economics, with large scale transfers of military training and material that would soothe the political difficulties arising from subsequent social and demographic change.⁷

European out-of-area interests, on the other hand, reflected a less systematic approach and clearly demonstrated the unique national priorities of the European NATO members particularly when removed from the "immediate reach of Soviet military power"⁸ . Both France and Great

⁶
Ibid., p. 71.

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

Britain have long maintained their own interests outside the traditional confines of NATO. French out-of-area policy was highlighted by concerted efforts to maintain an independent (of NATO) position in relation to French national interests. With the humiliating failures in Indochina, Suez, and Algeria, a firm and selective stance on out-of-area issues was deemed as vital to General deGaulle's adherence to a policy of strict political independence. This policy ultimately manifested itself in France's withdrawal from NATO's integrated command structure in 1966, an attempt to secure spheres of influence in the post-colonial regimes through trade and defense programs, and in a sophisticated arms sales and diplomatic policy in areas such as the Middle East.⁹

Similarly, Britain's main concern was to manage adroitly its own colonial withdrawal while maintaining "residual political and economic interests through the looser Commonwealth federation."¹⁰ However, this policy came at a time when the United States, particularly in the early 1960's, was attempting to balance the demands of a strategic nuclear build-up with the need to counter the Soviet Union's (read Krushchev's) well-published support for wars of national liberation in the Third World.

⁹
Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁰
Ibid., p. 71.

Consequently, gaining the support of the NATO allies with "parallel interests" out-of-area became a highly desirable policy objective of the United States. Unfortunately, British effectiveness in out-of-area concerns was steadily reduced as a result of an economic and financial crisis at home. In 1970, Britain reiterated that "it remains our intention to withdraw British forces from the Persian Gulf by the end of 1971."¹¹

This reduced European military contribution to out-of-area interests coincided with the emergence of Iran as the "flagship" of the new "twin pillars" strategy of the United States. However, it should be noted that while the 1967 Harmel Report had called for greater coordination between the allies on out-of-area issues, in reality the report merely reflected a growing European concern over the adverse effect the redeployment of American troops to Vietnam was having on European security. As the United States entered the post-Vietnam era, the Nixon Doctrine was seen as a means to

. . . shift emphasis to the use of indigenous manpower resources, armed and trained from Washington, in order to provide an interlocking series of regional arrangements capable of ensuring the overall "containment" of non-Western influence. In this way, the final withdrawal of British forces from the Gulf in 1971 was not seen as a vital issue. Instead, the U.S. placed emphasis on its emergent alliance with the Shah

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Statement on the Defence Estimates 1970. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Cmnd 4290), p. 4.

of Iran as the impending debacle in Vietnam would lead to a reorientation of American security considerations in the Middle East and Southwest Asia. Iran was cast as the major of the "twin pillars" of Western security in the region - the other being Saudi Arabia - with the Shah's regime subsequently receiving 19 billion dollars in U.S. arms between 1972 and 1978 as the flagship of the new strategy.¹²

The collapse of the Iranian "pillar" in 1979 exacerbated the problems encountered by the United States in the post-Vietnam era of relative economic decline and political insecurities in balancing global security interests with steadily decreasing means. The concomitant economic rise of Europe and Japan was accomplished outside of the "geo-strategic paradigm" established by the United States at the beginning of the Cold War. As some analysts have concluded, "this left a gap in Washington's ability to assume a credible leadership of the Western world, with its military power no longer able to guarantee an exclusive or even decisive influence in important areas of world policy."¹³ An early manifestation of this gap was the inter-allied disagreements during the 1973 October War.

In the aftermath of the oil price revolution of the early 1970s and the concomitant shift in the world economy toward a more independent system, many European nations established trade, finance, and development links to

¹² Davis and George, p. 72.

¹³ Ibid.

nations in regions like the Middle East: "such areas (Middle East) are certainly not linked to the geo-strategic concerns which dominated much Western thinking on regional politics and economic development in the fifties and sixties."¹⁴

After the 1973 October War, it became quite clear that any debate between alliance members over Persian Gulf policy would take place in a highly politicized context. It was also readily apparent that peripheral security considerations would not be critical issues shaping NATO policy. In fact,

. . . a precedent of sorts had emerged for dealing with regional security problems: individual states undertaking operations in the periphery could expect at least some political support from their allies, yet collective NATO participation in such ventures went far beyond the expected norms of alliance behavior.¹⁵

Throughout the early 1980's, the out-of-area debate¹⁶ rose to the top of the NATO agenda. The debate was generated primarily by the U.S. reaction to the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This U.S. reaction manifested itself in the form of the Carter Doctrine (and Reagan Corollary), the rapid deployment force (RDF), and ultimately the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).

¹⁴

Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁵

Kupchan, International Organization, p. 319.

¹⁶

Ibid., p. 321.

The Europeans agreed to address out-of-area issues at the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and defense Planning Committee (DPC) levels. Several NATO communiques and reports reflected a clear consensus of American and European willingness to cooperate on out-of-area problems.¹⁷ Negotiations at the DPC and NAC levels eventually produced a framework for addressing security arrangements in Southwest Asia. These arrangements were formalized at the Bonn Summit in 1982 where the Allies developed a formula for responding to conflict in the Southwest Asian region, a formula which has served as the basis for NATO's out-of-area policy since 1982. The formula is based on consultation, facilitation, and compensation:

The allies agreed to consult on out-of-area deployments and the Europeans agreed both to facilitate the transport of U.S. troops and to compensate for the diversion of U.S. assets.¹⁸

NATO's international staff produced a report in 1984 which studied the impact a diversion of U.S. assets to Southwest Asia would have on NATO's defensive capability.

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For example, see: North Atlantic Assembly, Political Committee, "Interim Report of the Sub-Committee on Out of Area Security Challenges to the Alliance" (Brussels: November 1984), p. 5; North Atlantic Assembly, "Interim Report -- Study of the Implications on NATO of the U.S. Strategic Concept for South-West Asia" (Brussels: November 1984), p. 7; NATO DPC Final Communique (May 1980), Paragraphs 5 and 6; NATO NAC Final Communique (December 1981), Paragraph 9.

18

Kupchan, p. 322.

The report recommended specific compensation measures to
be implemented by the European members.¹⁹ However,
despite this apparent cooperation at the political level,
the Europeans up until 1987 had yet to take the necessary
measures to compensate for any potential diversion of
U.S. assets to Southwest Asia at the operational level.²⁰

Given this background, how then can we understand the
initial American failure to elicit European support for the
reflagging operation? Moreover, how can we explain the
gradual shift of position by the Europeans to one of (tacit)
support for U.S. policy under the auspices of the Western
European Union (WEU)? In short, why did a political
agreement and its subsequent transformation into an
operational agreement emerge? The answers to these
questions can be found by an analysis of the four hypotheses

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North Atlantic Assembly, "Study on the Implications
for NATO of the U.S. Strategic Concept for South-West Asia
-- Interim Report," (Brussels: November 1984), p. 7.

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It should be noted that despite this poor
implementation record, significant allied cooperation did in
fact take place as evidenced by the movement away from
previously implacable positions and in the specific wording
of cooperation contained in the reports and communiques.
Additionally, the compensation and facilitation issues were
placed on the agendas of European and American defense
planning programs. For example see: U.S. Congress, House,
Committee on Armed Services, NATO: An Alliance of Shared
Values -- Report of the Delegation to NATO Countries - 1982
(Washington: U.S. Gov't. Print. Off., 1982), pp. 70-71; and
U.K. House of Commons, Second Report from the Defence
Committee -- Statement on the Defence Estimates 1980
(London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1980), p. 62.

explaining alliance cooperation and then applying them to the case study.

Causal Statements

Prior to refining the four propositions regarding intra-alliance behavior, a method of measuring cooperation and discord within the context of NATO should be established. As previously noted, cooperative behavior can be measured along three dimensions:

First, allies can engage in joint operations or offer explicit military assistance to each other. Put bluntly, they can undertake coordinated actions. Second, cooperation can take the form of compromise on policy issues, which is then reflected in official statements and documents. Third, cooperative behavior can be measured by economic contributions to collective defense capability. Allies cooperate when they reach some mutually acceptable and reasonable agreement about sharing the defense burden.²¹

Likewise, to confirm or validate one of these four hypotheses requires the formulation of a series of causal statements that explain cooperative or noncooperative behavior as it pertains to the Gulf case study. With the help of Kupchan's framework, the following causal statements form the basis for explaining cooperation and noncooperation:

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Kupchan, p. 323.

Explaining Cooperation

1. Alliance members' common concern about the increasing threats to western interests in the Gulf led to increasing cooperation and support of the U.S. reflagging policy. (External threat hypothesis)
2. The United States induced cohesion through intra-alliance negotiating by threatening to impose sanctions against the West Europeans for their noncooperation. The United States was able to make the costs of noncooperation (potential abandonment) outweigh the costs of cooperation (potential entrapment). (Alliance security dilemma hypothesis)
3. A cooperative agreement on the reflagging policy emerged because the United States maintained (or increased) its ability (and willingness) to provide the "public good" produced by NATO, and the West European allies benefited accordingly. If U.S. provision of the "public good" declined, then decreasing cooperation would result. (Collective action hypothesis)
4. Cooperation on the reflagging policy emerged because of domestic political pressure. U.S. and European legislative bodies and the public opted to support the policy. (Domestic politics hypothesis)

Explaining Noncooperation

1. The European allies failed to support the reflagging policy because they did not perceive the external threat to their interests serious enough to warrant direct participation. (External threat hypothesis)
2. The European allies refused to support the policy because U.S. pressure was not strong enough to force European assistance. The costs associated with U.S. retaliation for European unwillingness did not outweigh the costs of supporting the policy. (Alliance security dilemma hypothesis)
3. The European allies failed to assist the United States because they were "free riding". (Collective action hypothesis)

4. The European allies failed to assist the United States because they lacked the domestic political and economic support at home. (Domestic politics hypothesis)

Noncooperative Behavior Analysis

Having defined the four applicable hypotheses and formulated a series of causal statements, it is now possible to apply this theoretical framework to the case study to determine why a political agreement and its subsequent transformation into an operational agreement emerged. The noncooperative aspects of alliance behavior are examined first in order to lay the foundation for explaining the gradual shift in position by the Europeans to one of (tacit) support for U.S. policy.

The External Threat

To confirm this hypothesis, it is necessary to prove that the emergence of U.S.-allied cooperation in the Gulf resulted from a growing common concern over the vulnerability of Western interests (primarily access to oil) in the Gulf. As Kupchan points out, to avoid "circularity" it is important to establish an independent measure of threat when testing this hypothesis. This can be achieved by consulting official policy statements and documents regarding threat assessment and then by examining events and their impact on a changing strategic environment in the Gulf. According to Kupchan, the best way to test this hypothesis is to proceed along two lines of argument.

First, an assessment should be made of whether the allies perceived a deteriorating security situation in the Gulf between the 7 March, 1987, U.S. decision to reflag and the first indication of European support expressed at the 20 August, 1987, WEU meeting at The Hague. Second, a determination should be made of whether the allies perceived the threat as serious enough throughout this period to warrant cooperation. If proven, then it can be proposed that this cooperation came about gradually after the U.S. reflagging decision was made primarily because it took time for the perception of threat and suggested responses to "coalesce" into a "common" policy.

Between March of 1987 and the June, 1987, summit of the seven major industrialized nations in Venice, The United States' attempt to elicit European support fell on deaf ears. For example, France, in spite of the 13 July attack on the French container ship Ville d'Avers, the 17 July break in diplomatic relations with Iran over the Gorji affair²³, and the June deployment of French troops in support of the Chadian government's operations to regain the

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Kupchan, p.

23

Wahid Gorji, a suspected Iranian terrorist, had taken diplomatic refuge inside the Iranian Embassy in Paris. An "official" driver and translator for the Embassy, Gorji had been previously apprehended by French authorities for concealing high explosives inside his suitcase. The ensuing diplomatic embroglio led to the severing of diplomatic relations between Iran and France on 17 July.

Aozou Strip from Libya, continued to cling to its "sovereign" national position regarding the U.S. reflagging operation.

The French position was clearly delineated by a terse statement made by the French ambassador to Kuwait:

"France's stand is not to provide protection for tankers entering the Gulf, whether they are French or non-French." ²⁴

Similarly, French Defense Minister Andre Giraud, commenting in an interview with the left-wing daily Liberation,

carefully avoided any reference to the reflagging operation and announced that France had decided to "adjust" its naval presence in the Gulf by sending the corvette George Leygues to the Gulf to augment its three escorts already on patrol

²⁵ in the region. Noting that France had opted for the "pragmatic approach" to the problem, the Defense Ministry went to great lengths to differentiate between "escorting" and "accompanying" ships: "escorting" was described as a military defensive position, whereas "accompanying" civilian ships was portrayed as a "form of assistance that could have

²⁶ a technical or medical aspect." Giraud made it perfectly

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Fatimah Mansur, "Interview with Ambassador to Kuwait Marcel Laugel," Al-Anba, 20 July 1987, pp. 5, 22.

25

Jean Guisnel, "Interview with French Defense Minister Andre Giraud," Liberation, 23 July 1987, p. 5. The French Navy already had three ships in the Gulf: the supply tanker La Marne and two escort vessels, the corvettes Victor Schoelcher and the Protet.

26

"Giraud On Ships Accompanied In Gulf, Attack Stance," FBIS-WEU-87-141, 23 July 1987, p. 11.

clear however that the French government had no intention of remaining passive (if attacked) and noted that it was hoped the "pragmatic approach" would serve as a "general deterrent" to potential hostile action against French interests in the Gulf.

As with France, Great Britain continued to cling to its "sovereign" national position regarding the reflagging operation. British Defense Secretary George Younger praised the Royal Navy's low-profile presence in the Gulf as the correct way to ensure the safety of British tankers. According to Younger, Britain's Armilla Patrol -- a force of one destroyer and two frigates -- was the "correct, non-provocative, low-profile way of protecting British tankers". In an obvious attempt to distance itself

27
Guisnel, p. 5.

28
Britain had maintained the Armilla Patrol in the Gulf since October of 1980. In the beginning, the patrol was to remain in the Gulf of Oman and to provide a visible naval presence to British merchant shipping entering the Gulf. The mission was to encourage merchant shipping to continue through the Strait of Hormuz "without giving any suggestion that military intervention was planned." In November of 1986, the British Secretary of State for Defense announced that in response to an intensified threat to merchant shipping, the amount of time spent in Gulf waters would be "increased as a response to local developments." The three warships then in the Gulf were the type 22 Frigate Broadsword, the type 42 destroyer Cardiff and Southampton, and the Royal Fleet Auxilliary Tidespring. For further information on the Armilla Patrol composition and mission see: "Joint Memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Defence, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department of

from the U.S. reflagging operation, the British government painstakingly brushed off Kuwaiti attempts to gain protection from the Royal Navy by stating emphatically that reflagging is a commercial matter, and not one for governments.²⁹ This position touched-off an in-house political debate highlighted by the Labour Party's taunts of "rent-a-flag" and editorial comments calling for the government to "distinguish between re-flagging and re-registration" in the interests of political clarity at home and the safety of the British Forces presently in the Gulf.³⁰

West Germany continued to stand behind the constitutional limitations on the use of its military outside the confines of the NATO area. As early as May of 1987, both the Defense and Foreign Ministries, citing the Basic Law, adamantly rejected any use of the Federal Navy in safe-guarding the sea lanes inside the Persian Gulf.³¹ In

Transportation in reply to questions put by the Committee" in U.K. House of Commons, Third Special Report from the Defence Committee, The Protection of British Merchant Shipping in the Persian Gulf, (London: HMSO, 13 May 1987).

29

Jonathan Smith, "Younger on Navy's 'Low-Profile' Presence in Gulf," London Press Association, 21 July 1987.

30

"The Risk Factor," The Daily Telegraph, 23 July 1987, p. 12.

31

"Action of Federal Navy In Gulf Rejected," Frankfurter Allgemeine, 29 May 1987, p. 3.

June, further clarification was provided by Peter Kurt Wuezbach (CDU) parliamentary state secretary in the Defense Ministry this time citing the division of tasks within NATO:

We are performing our tasks here very thoroughly along the intra-German border in the Baltic, in the North Sea, right up to the North Atlantic. Other states must act in the Gulf.³²

Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher added unequivocally that under the provisions of their constitutional law, West Germany had no intention of sending naval forces to the Persian Gulf to participate in the reflagging operations under the pretext of helping to establish stability in the region.³³

Several smaller European nations (Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway and Italy) moved to protect their own national (mostly economic) interests by maintaining warm diplomatic ties to Iran. In Italy, the headlines in the Rome dailies made it patently clear where the government stood on the reflagging issue: "Rome refuses even to talk about Italian ships in the Gulf."³⁴ Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti, taking a more diplomatic position, clearly

32

"Government Rejects U.S. Demand on Gulf Presence," FBIS-WEU-87-105, 2 June 1987, p. H3.

33

Ibid.

34

Vincenzo Nigro, "Rome Refuses Even to Talk About Italian Ships in the Gulf," La Repubblica, 27 May 1987, p. 13.

articulated the Italian government's position: "If there is a problem with navigation in the Persian Gulf it is better that it be dealt with by the United Nations."³⁵

Interestingly, Andreotti cited another reason for not getting militarily involved in the Gulf -- in the aftermath of the break in diplomatic relations between France and Iran over the Gorji affair, Italy had agreed to represent Paris' interests in Teheran. Andreotti added the fact of the Italian flag flying over the French Embassy in the Iranian capital as one more reason "for adopting a stance which will keep the doors open for negotiations...."³⁶

In summary, there is little evidence to suggest that the European allies perceived a serious threat to their interests in the Gulf. France and Great Britain continued to cling to their "sovereign" national positions. West Germany continued to stand behind the constitutional limitations on the use of its military outside the confines of the NATO area, and several smaller European nations (Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway and Italy) moved to protect their own national interests by maintaining warm diplomatic ties to Iran. Additionally, the announcement of the U.N. Resolution 598 on 20 July, 1987 shifted the focus away from the growing pressure to respond militarily to the

³⁵

Ibid.

³⁶

"Andreotti Defends Government Position on Gulf," Rome ANSA, FBIS-WEU-87-151, 6 August 1987, p. J1.

deteriorating Gulf situation. These differing national interests did not provide for a collaborative framework within which to address the growing Gulf security problem. In fact, when the first U.S. convoys set sail at the end of July, they did so without direct allied support. This lack of allied support has been attributed to the failure of the United States to consult with the allies during the formulation of the initial reflagging policy and the simple fact that less than one percent of Gulf oil shipping had been disrupted. In short, the Europeans failed to support the reflagging policy at this point in time because they did not perceive the external threat to their interests serious enough to warrant direct participation (causal statement 1 for noncooperation).

The Alliance Security Dilemma

To verify this hypothesis, it is necessary to show that the Europeans cooperated because they were forced to do so by the United States. In other words, the United States made the costs associated with noncooperation outweigh the costs of cooperation resulting in the Europeans moving to find a balance between entrapment and abandonment.

37

Davis and George, p. 77.

38

Kupchan, p. 330.

When the reflagged tanker Bridgeton struck an Iranian mine during the first convoy operation in July, a serious operational flaw in U.S. Naval capabilities was exposed -- a lack of adequate in-theatre mine countermeasures (MCM) capability. Since the European navies have large numbers of MCM vessels for their NATO mission of countering the Soviet mine threat, the United States increased calls for some form of assistance in the MCM area. These calls for assistance were linked to the perennial "burden sharing" arguments within and between the Executive and Legislative branches of the U.S. government. The only course of action available to the United States was to attempt, through "persuasive diplomacy," to push the Europeans into "measures beyond their collective obligations." ³⁹ The means chosen for this task consisted of a series of informal requests circulated around the European capitals by then Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger while the respective U.S. Embassies sought additional assistance through diplomatic channels. These efforts culminated in a meeting of the NAC and DPC at NATO headquarters in which Weinberger restated his request for support. Each of these efforts was met with "cautious rebuff".

The U.S. response was to play-down the rebuffs and focus on a bilateral effort to gain support. Upon the conclusion of a two-day DPC meeting (25-27 May), Secretary

39

Davis and George, p. 77.

Weinberger noted that he had discussssed with NATO defense ministries the "desirability of cooperative efforts" to ensure free passage in the Gulf, but that the United States did not make specific requests for assistance (emphasis added).⁴⁰ The following day, Charles Redman, in a State Department news briefing, apparently confirmed that the United States had not asked the NATO alliance for assistance in improving security in the Gulf:

The first point to be made is that we didn't ask NATO as an organization to take action in the Gulf.... the Persian Gulf is not within NATO's defined geographic area of responsibility. Nevertheless, the alliance recognizes that events outside its treaty area can affect the security interests of its members. And in that respect, NATO is on record as urging support for those alliance members which have the capability of protecting Western interests outside the treaty area.⁴¹

The spokesman added that the United States is "consulting bilaterally with individual NATO allies as well as with other allies around the world concerning possible courses of action with respect to the present situation in the Gulf."⁴² Emphasizing the non-organizational nature of

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U.S. Information Service, European Wireless File No. 101, "Weinberger, Carrington Discuss Free Passage in Gulf," 28 May 1987, Eur. 307.

41

U.S. Information Service, European Wireless File No. 102, "State Department Report - NATO Alliance Help Not Being Sought in Persian Gulf," 28 May 1987, Eur 402.

42

Ibid.

the U.S. request for assistance, the spokesman concluded his briefing by pointing out that "as an alliance, we have not asked for anything."⁴³

At a press conference following the DPC meeting, Weinberger was asked what kind of contribution NATO members (individually) could make to ensure safe passage in the Gulf. Weinberger's response illustrates the delicate and sensitive position the United States government found itself in resulting from the lack of prior allied consultation on the reflagging:

I think other nations can help in a number of ways. They can help with additional naval units. They could help with cooperative work in connection with air cover. They can assist in providing some of the infrastructure and some of the basic resources involved -- there are a number of ways. It can be done individually. It can be done by individual nations, growing out of bilateral discussions; possibly but not all that likely, that the alliance as a whole might do something.⁴⁴

The U.S. bilateral attempt at "persuasive diplomacy" ran into strong yet diplomatic opposition. The Netherlands made it quite clear that any MCM ships it might send to the Gulf would only be available under U.N. auspices. The government did indicate, however, that it was willing to assume additional NATO duties if other allied nations

43

Ibid.

44

USIS, European Wireless File No. 101, EUR 308.

decided to grant U.S. requests for MCM assistance.

Editorial comments in Dutch newspaper reflected the Netherlands's cautious yet diplomatic handling of the U.S. request by characterizing Foreign Minister Van den Broek's conditional promises to the United States as having

"prevented the Netherlands's Navy from becoming involved in the conflict in the Persian Gulf, while, on the other hand, the United States has no need to feel that it has been left in the lurch."

46

Italy continued to cling to the primacy of U.N. resolution 598 as the basis for its policy. Foreign Minister Andreotti advised patience over the Gulf situation and pointed out that "the problem is being examined by the United Nations." A reply to Secretary Weinberger's request for mine-sweepers, (which had been delivered to the Italian Defense Minister by U.S. Ambassador Rabb) was formulated at a one hour meeting held at the Chigi Palace between the president of the council of ministers Goria, Vice President Amato, Foreign Minister Andreotti and Defense Minister Zanone. The reply illustrated the growing gravity

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"Netherlands Rules out Direct Help to U.S. in Gulf," Hilversum International Service, FBIS-WEU-87-148, 3 August 1987, p. B1.

46

"Example," De Volksrant, 21 August 1987, p. 3.

47

"Andreotti Advises Patience Over Gulf Situation," Rome ANSA, FBIS-WEU-87-149, 4 August 1987, p. J1.

of the Persian Gulf situation, mentioned the possibility of sending Italian minesweepers to the Gulf, stressed Italian concern for freedom of navigation, and once again called for coordinated action through the U.N.. According to press reports, the Italian reply stipulated that "the participation of Italian minesweepers in the Persian Gulf operations is not opportune under the present, or possible future, circumstances. Italy's commitment... is to a multinational solution involving other European countries."

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Once again, West Germany continued its objection on legal (constitutional) grounds:

. . . the Federal Government's position is clear. It has been defined by the Federal Chancellor. We will not send warships to the Gulf. Currently, it is being considered to what degree we can relieve the Americans by a temporary operation of the Federal Navy within the Alliance - be it the Atlantic or in the Mediterranean. That will be discussed by the Alliance.⁴⁹

In a specific reference to the U.S. request for minesweeping assistance, Defense Minister Manfred Woerner stated that Secretary Weinberger "respects" the fact that the Federal Republic cannot assist the United States in the Gulf due to constitutional constraints. He diplomatically

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"Rome Rejects Call for Minesweepers in Gulf," Rome Domestic Service, FBIS-WEU-87-148, 3 August 1987, p. J1.

49

"Woerner Interviewed on Gulf, Pershing-1A," Mainz ZDF Television Network, FBIS-WEU-87-149, 4 August 1987, . H1.

revealed that the U.S. Defense Secretary had "applied no pressure of any kind" in making the request to the Federal
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Republic.

France continued to refuse support of the U.S. position having played no role in the formulation of the original reflagging policy and continued to cling to its "sovereign" national position. It should be noted, however, that this independent position manifested itself in the French Government's decision to place a Fleet Air Arm Force on alert as tension between Paris and Teheran intensified in the wake of the severing of diplomatic relations over the Gorji affair. The Air Arm Force included the carrier Clemenceau and two guided missile frigates, Le Suffren and Le Duquesne. As Defense Minister Giraud explained:

This is not intended as a threat. The fact is merely that France, which has an aircraft carrier, finds itself in a potential situation to use it to protect its maritime traffic. Nothing more.⁵¹

Interestingly, the Defense Minister stressed that French warships currently in the Gulf were not "escorting" France's merchant shipping in the Gulf but merely

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"Woerner Comments on Minesweepers, Euro-missiles," Hamburg DPA, FBIS-WEU-87-150, 5 August, 1987, p. H1.

51

"Giraud Explains Decision," Paris 'Domestic Service, FBIS-WEU-87-143, 27 July 1987, p. I1.

52

"accompanying" them. In a specific response to the U.S. request for minesweepers, Giraud pointed out that he had informed the United States that France simply would not send minesweepers to the Gulf.

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The British also expressed reservations on military grounds claiming they did not have the assets to provide air cover for an expansion of Royal Navy MCM assets let alone the assets of the Gulf Armilla Patrol already on station inside the Gulf. The request for British assistance was delivered to British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe by U.S. Ambassador Charles Price. The Foreign office indicated that the request would be given "the most serious

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consideration." The following day, however, Britain officially rejected the United States' request:

The decision is in line with Mrs. Thatcher's insistence that Britain must maintain a low-profile non-provocative presence in the area. But it is also a serious blow to American hopes of help from European allies -- Holland and West Germany have also turned down similar requests.

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"Giraud: Gulf Flotilla 'Out of Question'," Paris AFP, FBIS-WEU-87-144, 28 July 1987, p. 11.

53

"Government Will Send no Minesweepers to Gulf," Paris Domestic Service, FBIS-WEU-87-148, 3 August 1987, p. 11.

54

Chris Moncrief, "U.S. Request for Minesweeper Help in Gulf Rejected," London Press Association, 31 July 1987.

55

Ibid.

However, the Foreign Office kept the door to future assistance slightly ajar by indicating that "we have explained our position to the Americans and will continue to remain in close touch with them. If circumstances were to change our attitude to this matter might change."⁵⁶

In summary, the Netherlands made it clear that any MCM ships it might send to the Gulf would only be available under U.N. auspices while Italy continued to cling to the primacy of U.N. Resolution 598 as the basis for its policy. Likewise, West Germany continued its objection on legal (Constitutional) grounds and France refused to support the U.S. position having played no role in the formulation of the original reflagging policy. The British also expressed reservations on military grounds claiming it did not have the assets to provide air cover for an expansion of Royal Navy MCM assets let alone the assets of the Gulf Armilla Patrol already on station in the Gulf. Even after an early August tour of the NATO capitals by Deputy Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci, the European allies continued to rebuff U.S. calls for assistance.⁵⁷ Simply put, the Europeans refused to support the reflagging policy because U.S. pressure was not strong enough (at this time) to force

⁵⁶
Ibid.

⁵⁷
Davis and George, p. 77.

European cooperation. In other words, the costs associated with U.S. retaliation did not outweigh the costs of supporting the policy (causal statement 2 for noncooperation).

Collective Action

To verify this hypothesis, it is necessary to find evidence that allied cooperation resulted from U.S. willingness to assume the major portion of the burden associated with the reflagging mission in the Gulf. However, it should be noted that there is no universally accepted formula for determining each alliance members' so-called "fair share" of the collective defense burden. National contributions to this defense burden come in many shapes and sizes all requiring different methods of analysis. For example, quantifiable measures are normally broken down into indicators of ability to contribute to the collective defense effort such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) share, population share, and per capita GDP share and indicators of actual contributions such as defense expenditures, active defense manpower shares, and naval tonnage (see Table 12). However, there are other

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Kupchan, p. 335.

59

U.S. Dept. of Defense, Report on Allied Contributions to the Common Defense: A Report to the U.S. Congress by the Secretary of Defense. (Washington: U.S. Gov't Print. Off., April 1989), p. 21.

TABLE 12

COUNTRY PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED BURDENSARING AREAS

	BE	CA	DE	FR	GE	GR	IT	LU	NL	NO	PO	SP	TU	UK	US	JA
% GDP for Defense																
Active Duty Military and Civilian as % of Population																
Military, Civilians, and Reserves as % of Population																
Ground Combat Capability DEF/GDP																
Air Force Combat Aircraft/GDP																
Naval Tonnage/GDP																
Nuclear Contributions		*						*			*	*				*
Force Goal Performance				*								*				*
CDI Force Goals				*								*				*
Munitions Sustainability				*								*				*
Host Nation Support		*		*								*			*	
Military Assistance to LDDI				*		*					*	*	*			*
Developmental Assistance as a % of GDP						*		*			*	*	*			
Out-of-Area Contributions (Persian Gulf Support)											*					

Level of Performance and/or Contribution:

High
 High/Medium
 Medium
 Medium/Low
 Low
* Not available or not applicable

SOURCE: U.S. Dept. of Defense. Report on Allied Contributions to the Common Defense (Washington: U.S. Gov't. Print. Off., April 1989), p. 9.

non-quantifiable categories of indicators measuring the ability of a nation to contribute to the collective defense effort: "this assessment involves highly subjective judgments because benefits received are not easy to quantify." ⁶⁰ In other words,

Since one of the major benefits of participating in a collective defense effort is successful deterrence of conflict and freedom from foreign domination, some would argue that the larger a nation's population (or the larger its GDP), the more that nation has to lose if the alliance defense effort is not successful. By that line of reasoning, many of the indicators of economic condition and strength would reflect benefits received. Others would argue, however, that successful deterrence and freedom from domination are intangibles best left unquantified. ⁶¹

Similarly, the selective use of statistics can distort the central points of the burden-sharing issue. One recent study has concluded that:

In the absence of any index for the burden or for what constitutes a 'fair share' distribution, there is a constant temptation to use handy measures without careful consideration of their limitations. Caution is needed in evaluating ad hoc yardsticks and selective data sometimes used to measure the distribution of the alliance's fiscal burden. In our view, no one standard is adequate to convey burden-sharing in the alliance. Each measure has its limitations and an accurate picture can only be obtained by examining a variety of measures. ⁶²

60

Ibid., p. 23.

61

Ibid.

62

Gordon Adams and Eric Munz, Fair Shares: Bearing the Burden of the NATO Alliance (Washington: Defense Budget Project at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, March 1986), p. 11.

In short, some of the more important factors in measuring the burden simply do not lend themselves to
63
quantification.

However, as Kupchan points out with respect to the Persian Gulf, out-of-area considerations have a direct impact on the provision of two specific "public goods" within the confines of the alliance: First, deterrence and defense in Europe and second, access to Persian Gulf oil.
64
Therefore, the dedication of U.S. military assets to the Gulf mission theoretically increases provision of the second good (Gulf oil) and decreases provision of the first public good (security in Europe). If this hypothesis is theoretically valid, then tension between the United States and its European allies would increase as the U.S. contributions of the first public good declined. In other words, "a declining contribution decreases cooperation because smaller powers derive fewer benefits and are less
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willing to play a politically submissive role."

This line of reasoning certainly explains the initial noncooperative behavior of the European allies: they failed

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North Atlantic Council, Defence and Security Committee, Report of the Sub-Committee on Defence Cooperation on Burden-Sharing in the Alliance (Brussels: November 1988), p. 9.

64

Kupchan, p. 338.

65

Ibid., p. 336.

to assist the United States because they were "free riding" (Causal Statement No. 3 for Noncooperation). On the surface the collective action proposition appears valid as the concept of "free riding" could explain the initial European noncooperative response. The United States, in the initial formulation of the policy, apparently decided to "go it alone" in the Gulf. Therefore, the Europeans had little incentive to respond to U.S. calls for assistance, but much incentive to encourage the United States through political support to continue its unilateral effort to provide protection for Gulf shipping.⁶⁶ However, in the aftermath of the Bridgeton incident, and with the formal request for allied MCM assistance, the United States indicated it was no longer willing or ready to "go it alone." In requesting allied assistance, the United States implied, however slightly, that ships and aircraft normally available for duty within a NATO context were now needed in the Persian Gulf.

However, if the Europeans were in fact "free riding," then, according to the collective action hypothesis, as the U.S. contribution to their conventional defense decreased they in turn should have compensated by a corresponding increase to the collective good. Prior to the 20 August WEU meeting at the Hague, at which the first tangible signs of

66

Ibid., p. 335.

allied cooperation were evident, no such increase in the European share of the collective defense burden took place neither in terms of compensation for the diversion of U.S. military assets to the Gulf nor in the facilitation of the movement of U.S. forces to the Gulf. As demonstrated later in this study, the shift by the alliance to a cooperative position can best be explained through a line of reasoning associated with a series of events which actually support the security dilemma proposition more than the collective action proposition.

Domestic Politics

To prove this hypothesis, it is necessary to find evidence that domestic political pressure caused both the United States and the European allies to cooperate on the reflagging issue.⁶⁷ Without question, congressional and to some extent public opinion, forced the Reagan administration to reassess the policy in terms of allied cooperation. Due to Europe's greater dependence on Persian Gulf oil, U.S. public and congressional sentiment strongly favored a more equitable European share of the defense burden in the Gulf. Numerous congressional hearings throughout the first half of 1987 reflected a sometimes intense effort to pressure the administration into seeking allied assistance for the reflagging operation. For example, April of 1987

67

Ibid., p. 337.

congressional testimony demonstrated an increased effort to enlist the support of the GCC states, particularly Saudi Arabia, in the protection of Kuwait shipping.⁶⁸

Furthermore, and in the aftermath of the USS Stark tragedy on 17 May, the Senate passed a resolution on 29 May requiring a full report from the administration on U.S. Gulf policy as an amendment to the Supplemental Appropriations Bill which was necessary for the financing of the U.S. Navy's operations in the Gulf.⁶⁹ This in turn led to intense administration lobbying both at home and overseas to gain support for the reflagging policy.

The domestic political squabble over the policy reached new heights in late spring and early summer as renewed congressional debate over the efficacy of the policy resulted in legislation calling for a 90-day delay in implementing the reflagging plan.⁷⁰ Congressional frustration over the lack of sufficient allied support could

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U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East. Developments in the Middle East, April 1987, (Washington: U.S. Gov't. Print. Off., 21 April 1987), p. 34.

69

The response to this legislation came in the form of a U.S. Department of Defense Report on Security Arrangements in the Gulf (The Weinberger Report).

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See U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East. Developments in the Middle East, July 1987, (Washington: U.S. Gov't. Print. Off., 28 July 1987).

be clearly seen in a series of pointed supplemental questions submitted by the House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East to the State Department regarding the specific contributions of Britain, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, West Germany and Japan.⁷¹ On the surface then, there is ample evidence to suggest that congressional and to some extent public opinion, forced the Reagan Administration to raise the issue of allied support for the Gulf operation at the NATO NAC and DPC levels as well as through State Department diplomatic channels in the respective European capitals.

This hypothesis, however, holds up less well in terms of the European position. It should first be noted that gauging European public opinion, particularly on matters of

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For detailed information on these questions and responses see Appendix I of U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Developments in the Middle East, September 1987, (Washington: U.S. Gov't. Print. Off., 15 September 1987), pp. 65-69. It should also be noted that these congressional events apparently served as the catalyst for reviving the burden-sharing issue within the alliance. For example, the U.S. Senate's FY-89 military spending bill contains an extensive burden-sharing proposal that required a review of U.S. strategic interests and the appointment of a presidential envoy to negotiate the issue with the allies. Likewise, the House Armed Services Committee established a "Defense Burden-Sharing Panel" (chaired by Representative Patricia Schroeder) which issued a highly critical report on the allies' contributions to the common defense. For further information see: North Atlantic Assembly, Report on the Subcommittee on Defence Cooperation on Burden-Sharing in the Alliance, p. 1; and Report on the Defense Burden-Sharing Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Congress, House (Washington: U.S. Gov't. Print. Off., August 1988).

intra-allied national security, can, at times, be best categorized as an inexact science. Opinions are not uniform across nations and in some cases there are deep divisions on security issues while in other domestic areas the divisions are less severe. As a recent study concluded:

The implications of this diversity seems clear. To the extent that NATO governments must depend on domestic consensus to implement policies, the pace of harmonization and even the ability to harmonize will be complicated by the diversity of opinions within member states. Further complications will arise because of differences in the political institutions and domestic conditions that mediate domestic opinion. For example, although it is clear that there is a general consensus against increasing defense budgets at the cost of social programs, the impact of this constraint in different countries will depend on rates of economic growth.⁷²

Throughout the first six months of 1987, European public and parliamentary opinion reflected a cautious and reserved position regarding the U.S. reflagging policy. This general European public concern manifested itself in fears over escalation of regional conflicts to an East-West confrontation as well as an appearance of a resurgence of Western colonialism.⁷³ A more specific concern can be established by an examination of British and Italian

72

William K. Domke, Richard C. Eichenberg and Catherine M. Kelleher, "Consensus Lost? Domestic Politics and the "Crisis" in NATO," World Politics, Vol. 39, No. 3, April 1987, p. 405.

73

Davis and George, p. 338. For a complete list of the 1987 NATO/WEU governing and opposition parties see Table 13.

TABLE 13

NATO/WEU GOVERNING AND OPPOSITION PARTIES (1987)

<u>Country</u>	<u>Governing Parties</u>	<u>Opposition Parties</u>
Belgium	Flemish Christian People's (CVP) Walloon Social Christian (PSC) Flemish Liberal (PW) Walloon Liberal (PRL)	Francophone Socialist (PS) Flemish Socialist (SP) Volksunie (VU)
France	Rally for the Republic (RPR) Union for French Democracy (UDF) Republican (PR)	Socialist (PS) (holds presidency but not government) Left Radical Movement (MRG) Communist (PCF) National Front
Federal Republic of Germany	Christian Democratic/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) Free Democratic (FDP)	Social Democratic (SPD) Green
Italy	Christian Democratic (DC) Socialist (PSI) Republican (PRI) Social Democratic (PSDI) Liberal (PLI)	Communist (PCI) Italian Social Movement (MSI)
Luxembourg	Christian Social Socialist Workers	Democrats (Liberals) Communist Green Alternative
Netherlands	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) Liberal (VVD)	Labor (PVDA) Democrat 66 (D-66)
United Kingdom	Conservative	Labour Alliance Social Democratic and Liberal
United States	Republican (Executive)	Democratic (Legislative)

SOURCE: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Challenges to NATO's Consensus: West European Attitudes and U.S. Policy (Washington: U.S. Gov't. Print. Off., May 1987), p. 24.

internal differences of opinion over the reflagging policy as (relatively) representative of the broader European concern. British domestic politics reflected a predictable split down party lines: the Conservatives praised the low-profile non-provocative policy of the Thatcher government while the Labour Party warned that America's reflagging of Kuwaiti ships was a "high risk and potentially very dangerous policy" that could result in a "shooting war."⁷⁴ Amid taunts of "rent-a-flag," Labour frontbenchers called for U.S.-Soviet cooperation for solving the problem in the Gulf:

. . . There is the general political problem of being drawn into a shooting war in the Gulf and the fact that we seem to be following along behind a very dangerous American policy. One has to question the sense of that policy. It would be far better if the United States and the Soviet Union were to get together and solve this problem rather than the United States and Britain trying to go it alone.⁷⁵

Perhaps the most colorful European domestic political debate over the U.S. reflagging policy took place within Italy's five-party coalition government. The debate enlivened the traditional quiet summer political scene in the Italian capital: Foreign Minister Andreotti, a Christian

74

Jonathan Smith, "Younger on Navy's 'Low-Profile' Presence in Gulf," London Press Association, 21 July 1987.

75

Chris Moncrief, "Howe, Younger, Davies Comment on Gulf Crisis," London: Press Association, 21 July 1987.

Democrat, joined ranks in early August with what has been described as "strange bed-fellows" -- the Communist Party and the extreme left wing Demorazia Proletaria -- all of them publically stating their opposition to any form of unilateral Italian naval support in the Gulf. ⁷⁶ Ironically, Andreotti suddenly found himself aligned against the other four parties which made up the governing coalition -- Socialists, Social Democrats, Liberals and Republicans -- as well as members of his own party. Those favoring Italian support of the reflagging policy centered around liberal Defense Minister Zanone and the rest of his party as well as the Republicans and the right-wing Italian Social Movement. ⁷⁷ Prime Minister Gorla's claim of a "wide margin of agreement" among coalition parties "that Italy would continue to follow the line adopted up till now and favor a United Nation's settlement of the problem" seemed far from convincing at the height of the Italian political debate on its Persian Gulf Policy. ⁷⁸

⁷⁶ "Debate Continues on Sending Navy to Gulf," Rome ANSA, FBIS-WEU-87-157, p. J1.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid. Ironically, at the height of the Italian debate, a French weekly, L'Evenement du Jeudi, reported that several European arms producers, including Italy's Valsella Company, had provided "millions" of land and sea mines to Iran between 1981 and 1984. Allegations that the Italian government had authorized these sales were adamantly denied by the Foreign Ministry. For more information see:

In summary, the domestic politics proposition, by itself, is insufficient to explain the initial noncooperative behavior of the Alliance members. While a case can certainly be made that the allies initially failed to assist the United States because they lacked the domestic political and economic support at home, other factors, such as a divergence of interests and insufficient pressure by the alliance leader, played a more substantive role in the noncooperative behavior of the European allies.

Cooperative Behavior Analysis

Given this background on the search for an explanation for the initial noncooperative behavior of the European allies, how then can we understand the shift in the European position to one of support (however tacit) of the U.S. reflagging policy? In other words, how did an emerging consensus of immediate interests evolve into a cooperative political and operational agreement? Having examined the aspects of noncooperative behavior, an analysis of the European shift to cooperative behavior however sovereign in pretext can now be made through an application of the same theoretical framework.

"Government Denies Sale of Mines to Iran," FBIS-WEU-87-157, p. J1; and "Investigation of Alleged Mine Sales to Iran Begins," FBIS-WEU-87-159, p. J1.

The External Threat

A series of events beginning in mid-August of 1987 in the Persian Gulf altered the external threat perception of each ally and precipitated a gradual shift in the collective European position. Added to this altered threat perception were increased American efforts to secure European support which were coupled to a shift in U.S. policy emphasis "to guarantee the integrity of international freedom of navigation . . . as a matter of concern for all of the

Western States."⁷⁹ The British position shifted after the Texaco Caribbean tanker was mined in the Fujairah

international anchorage in the Gulf of Oman on 10 August.

The British announced that four additional Hunt-class minesweepers would join the Armilla Patrol in the Gulf.⁸⁰

The announcement came after a ninety minute meeting at Downing Street on 11 August involving the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Defence and the Minister of State in the Foreign Office. The result of this meeting reflected a clear consensus over the recent and disturbing discovery of mines in what had previously been considered a safe area -- the Gulf of Oman -- outside the declared war zone. The Fujairah international anchorage, until now, had been

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Davis and George, p. 77.

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Chris Moncrief, "UK to Send Minesweepers, Support Ship to Gulf," London Press Association, 11 August 1987.

considered a safe haven for international shipping. As the Defence Minister pointed out:

News of further mining in the Gulf area over the past 48 hours shows that a new situation has arisen there. There is an increased danger from mines in the Armilla Patrol's operational area. The government has therefore decided to equip the Armilla Patrol with a minesweeping capability to enable it to continue to carry out its tasks effectively.⁸¹

Noting that Britain was the only nation which had conducted an extremely successful low-profile operation for years and had successfully accompanied British ships in and out of the Gulf, Younger added that the non-provocative approach to the problem would continue. As a somewhat cryptic harbinger of things to come, Younger clearly indicated that the British government was beginning to move in the direction of a more coordinated allied policy of cooperation (within a traditionally sovereign context) by stating: "We hope that nations with suitable assets will feel able to contribute their assets to help their (emphasis added) ships make use of the high seas."⁸²

On 11 August, France expressed a similar concern for protecting shipping in international waters and announced that increased measures to protect French shipping would be implemented. Citing the mines found in the Fujairah

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

anchorage, Defense Minister Giraud officially announced that two minesweepers would be sent to the Gulf to augment French naval forces already in the region:

. . . since yesterday evening mines have already been found in the sea of Oman and consequently we believe that security of the French ships that are in that region cannot be well ensured, completely ensured, unless these two minesweepers are also sent.⁸³

Specifically, these ships were to augment the Clemenceau battle group, which had sortied from Toulon in late July in response to the deteriorating diplomatic relations between France and Iran. At the time of the French decision, the Clemenceau was enroute to the Indian Ocean.

Italy's coalition government had been divided over the Gulf security issue: the Foreign Ministry hoped to maintain favorable relations with Iran while the Defense Ministry was eager to promote Italian prestige as a rising influence in NATO's southern flank and Middle East politics by offering assistance in the form of a naval force for the Gulf operation. The combined effect of the failure of U.N. Resolution 598 to take hold and the Iranian attack on the Italian merchant ship Jolly Robino (3 September) resulted in the Andreotti Government, sending under Parliamentary

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"Giraud Announces Two Minesweepers Moving to Gulf," Paris Domestic Service, FBIS-WEU-87-155, p. 11. The number of French MCM ships were increased to a total of three by the Defense Ministry on 14 August.

pressure, an Italian naval force to the Gulf. Foreign Minister Andreotti, still isolated within the majority of the cabinet members who favored sending ships to the Gulf, reluctantly endorsed the governments new policy.⁸⁴ According to Andreotti, Italy's decision to send a naval task force is "in line with Italy's traditional foreign policy, serves to protect shipping and is a clear warning to those who do not intend to respect Italy's neutrality."⁸⁵ In a pointed reference to the Jolly Robino, Andreotti said that the attack demonstrated the "immediate grave risks facing Italian ships and determined the governments reaction."⁸⁶ Still clinging to the rapidly receding policy of U.N. resolution of the crisis, Andreotti marked out Italy's political objectives:

Our political policy follows a triple objective: maintain contacts with the warring parties, safeguard Western unity and reinforce the efficiency of the United Nations through the cohesion of its members.⁸⁷

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Sandra Bonsanti, "Andreotti Isolated Within Majority: Stormy Meeting at Chigi Palace," La Repubblica, 5 September 1987, p. 7.

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"Andreotti Gives Gulf Decision," Rome ANSA, FBIS-WEU-87-174, 9 September 1987, p. 16.

86

Ibid.

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Ibid.

The West German government, sensing this shift in the collective European position, agreed to transfer naval forces to the Mediterranean to compensate for the absences created by measures taken in the Gulf by France, Britain, Italy, and the United States.⁸⁸ However, the Federal government made it abundantly clear that such assistance was merely an "example of the Federal Republic's willingness to offer help at short notice if asked by NATO partners."⁸⁹

Following the 20 August meeting of the WEU, both the Dutch and Belgian governments began to shift their position to one of tacit support for the growing European minesweeping contribution to U.S. efforts in the Gulf. The government of the Netherlands was the first of the Low Countries to announce that it was prepared "in principle" to send minesweepers to the Gulf. Foreign Minister Van den Broeck qualified the announcement, however, by stipulating⁹⁰ that such support can only happen in a European context. Important as this statement was, subsequent public government statements and press reports focused on the caution and conditionality contained in the Foreign

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Davis and George, p. 77-79.

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"Naval Ship Relieves Belgian Ship for Gulf Duty," Hamburg DPA, FBIS-WEU-87-184, p. 6.

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"Example," De Volkskrant, 21 August 1987, p. 3.

Ministers statement. However, by 11 September, the Dutch government finally reached the decision to send two minesweepers to the Gulf. Enclosed in a letter to the Secretary General of NATO from the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands on the NAC was a note his government presented to the Dutch Parliament giving the rationale for the decision:

The government's decision is based on the conviction that the freedom of shipping in the Gulf must be guaranteed in order to protect Dutch interests and that any action should be taken in conjunction with our European partners. The government takes the view that the West European countries have their own responsibility in this respect. Accordingly, the government attaches great value to the statement issued on 20 August by the member states of the Western European Union to the effect that the vital interests of Europe require that the freedom of shipping in the Gulf be assured at all times. ⁹¹

Similarly, and after a three week hiatus in the wake of the 20 August WEU meeting, Belgium announced on 15 September that for purely defensive operations and while respecting strict neutrality in the war, it would send two minesweepers and a command ship to the Gulf. ⁹² In a barrage of Belgian

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Letter from J.G.N. de Hoop Scheffer, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands on the North Atlantic Council to the Right Honorable the Lord Carrington Secretary General NATO on the Netherlands decision to send minehunters to the Gulf, 11 September 1987.

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In the weeks between the 20 August WEU meeting and the Belgian decision to send minesweepers to the Gulf, the Belgian Press, along party lines, speculated on the courses of action available to the government. The following sample headlines are representative of this speculation: "Under

television, radio, and written press interviews, Prime Minister Martens, Foreign Minister Tindemans, and Defense Minister de Donnea set about to explain and amplify the government's decision. In essence, the decision was cast as a means to protect Belgian rights and guarantee the freedom of international waters. The announcements revealed that, for the first time, the Belgians would form a squadron together with the Dutch and would be afforded protection by the British navy.⁹³

In summary, these series of events beginning in mid-August of 1987 altered the external threat perception of each ally and precipitated a gradual shift in the European position. In short, the growing common concern among alliance members about the increasing threats to Western interests in the Gulf led to gradually increasing cooperation and tacit support for the U.S. reflagging operation (causal statement No. 1 for cooperation). Added to this altered threat perception, as outlined in the

Study: A Belgian-Dutch Team for Removing the Gulf's Mines" (independent Le Soir - circ. 220,000); "The Belgian Navy is Ready for any Task" (conservative catholic La Libre Belgique - circ. 90,000); "Belgians to Gulf? -- Problems Mainly of Financial and Logistic Nature" (conservative catholic Gazet van Antwerpen (circ. 184,000); "Belgium Does not Want to Plunge Itself Overhastily into Gulf" (socialist De Morgen - circ. 43,000); "Belgium Examines 'Work Offer' to Remove Mines of Persian Gulf" (liberal catholic De Standaard - circ. 359,000).

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For a full text of the Belgian governments declaration see: De Standaard, 15 September 1987, p. 2.

following section, were increased American efforts to secure European support which were coupled to a shift in U.S. policy emphasis "to guarantee the integrity of international freedom of navigation . . . as a matter of concern for all of the Western states."⁹⁴

The Alliance Security Dilemma

To prove this hypothesis it is necessary to find evidence that the allies ultimately cooperated because the United States was able to make the costs of noncooperation (potential abandonment) outweigh the costs of cooperation (potential entrapment). Interestingly, elements of this hypothesis begin to creep into the collective European decision-making process in the form of a consultative forum created by the WEU. On 20 August, Alfred Cahen, then serving as Secretary General of the WEU, convened a group of senior officials from the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense of the member states of the WEU to consider the consequences of the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Gulf. Cahen acted in accordance with Article VIII, Paragraph (3) of the modified Brussels Treaty and the decision made in Rome in October of 1984 to hold consultations in the event crises in other regions of the

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Davis and George, p. 77-79.

world had an impact on European security. This was the first time such a meeting on out-of-area security had taken place under the post-war European security framework. As the Secretary-General pointed out, "it is indeed the first time European countries are acting together -- under the aegis of a European organization to which they belong -- on problems which do not touch upon the immediate area of defence but whose evolution may threaten their security in the broadest sense."

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The question remains, however, as to why the Europeans chose to seek not only a consensus on cooperation at this specific point in time, but also why they chose the

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Western European Union, Thirty-Third Ordinary Session, Communications From the Chairman-in-Office of the Council Concerning the Meetings of Senior Officials From the Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Defence of WEU Member States on the Situation in the Gulf Held in the Hague on 20th August and 15th September 1987, Document No. 1109, (Paris: WEU Assembly, December 1987), p. 33. See also: Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defense signed at Brussels on March 17, 1948, as amended by the "Protocol Modifying and Completing the Brussels Treaty" of October 23, 1954 (entered into force May 6, 1955). Article VIII, paragraph (3) reads in entirety:

3. At the request of any of the High Contracting Parties the Council shall be immediately convened in order to permit them to consult with regard to any situation which may constitute a threat to peace, in whatever area this threat should arise, or a danger to economic stability.

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Western European Union, Thirty-Fourth Ordinary Session, Organization of European Security, Report, Document No. 1138, (Paris: WEU Assembly, 9 May 1988), p. 7.

framework of the WEU? There appear to be several reasons: First, it became quite evident that any NATO action as such in an area not covered by the provisions of the Atlantic Treaty would be simply out of the question. As Davis and George quite accurately point out:

Any attempt to provide a joint policy among politically and geographically diverse members, in a context unrelated to the binding anti-Soviet anxiety, would be doomed to failure. An alternative was to use the framework of the Western European Union (WEU) for joint consultations . . . Although largely eclipsed by the emergence of the EEC and by the consolidation of NATO itself, it would prove useful as a consultative forum for its members: France, the United Kingdom, West Germany, Italy, and the Benelux States, leaving the integrity of the Alliance intact.⁹⁷

Second, any European involvement in American action outside the traditional confines of the NATO area inevitably causes tension in the alliance -- the U.S. bombing raid on Tripoli in 1986 remains the most recent (and classic) example. The third reason relates to the course of action the United States and its European allies might take: Although in agreement with the United States to defend freedom of navigation in the Gulf it remains somewhat doubtful that Europe would agree to directly intervene in the ongoing Gulf War.⁹⁸

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Davis and George, p. 78.

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Western European Union, Thirty-Fourth Ordinary Session, Cooperation Between Europe and the United States and Canada in Security Matters, Report, Document No. 1137, (Paris: WEU Assembly, 9 May 1988), p. 22.

The alliance security dilemma must also be analyzed from the European perspective to understand the gradually unfolding shift toward cooperation. The United States and Europe, quite frankly, have the same interests in the Middle East. A recent WEU report lists six mutual political objectives all of which remain in the general interest of the allies: first, to ensure freedom of navigation in the Gulf; second, to prevent the development of local imperialism; third, to counter international terrorism; fourth, to ensure world oil supplies; fifth, to avoid wild fluctuations in oil prices; and sixth, to work to restore
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peace between Iran and Iraq.

While several European countries have specific interests in the region, the dilemma occurs because not all members necessarily share the United States' view on how to take effective action. Therefore, it is not "possible for them to adhere systematically and continually to the view that there is just one Western interest and that the United
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States alone is responsible for safeguarding it."

Timing and the impact of events play a significant role in the formulation of policy and strategy. The deteriorating situation in the Gulf in August of 1987 rapidly became an international crisis requiring both intra-

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

European consultations as well as an exchange of views between alliance members. Assessing the problem through the European filter reveals that these consultations were required in order "to avoid unilateral measures being taken that might disturb the mutual confidence needed for the smooth running of the alliance in Europe itself."¹⁰¹ Hence, the Europeans moved to find that delicate balance between entrapment and abandonment. And therein lies the rub: for the Europeans, there seemed little reason to bring the United States (a world power) into opposition with Europe (a regional power) over the increasingly divisive issue of Gulf policy.¹⁰² Furthermore, it was clearly in the interest of the European alliance members to seek "not necessarily new institutions, but a dialogue with the United States on all these questions within adequate frameworks."¹⁰³

The United States has long held uncertain expectations regarding the public expression of European views on security matters. The December 1987 unanimous WEU approval of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) agreement changed the U.S. perception. By approving the agreement, the WEU

101
Ibid.

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

helped the Reagan Administration to convince Congress that the INF accords would not estrange Europe from the United States thereby ensuring Congressional approval.¹⁰⁴ The Dutch government, in perhaps the best expression of this subtle move to find a balance between abandonment and entrapment, adopted a cooperative role on U.S. Gulf policy based on the credibility of the alliance from Washington's perspective:

The prospect of increased conventional force goals in the post-INF era brought with it the need to establish favorable American participation in the new division of labor. A demonstration that the Europeans had a "reasonable" attitude to the broader problems of "Western" security was felt as desirable. This was compounded by financial difficulties in Washington as the Administration needed to accommodate the costs of the U.S. Naval operation in the Gulf against the Congressional determination to reduce federal expenditures on the Navy's operating budget for the following financial year.¹⁰⁵

This Congressional pressure to secure assistance from the NATO allies to offset these financial problems was best expressed in a memorandum from then Secretary of the Navy James Webb to Caspar Weinberger expressing the need for nations benefiting from the U.S. reflagging operations to "start living up to their responsibilities, so we

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Western European Union, Thirty-Fifth Ordinary Session, Future of European Security, Report, Document No. 1185, (Paris: WEU Assembly, 3 May 1989), p. 7.

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Davis and George, p. 78.

can downsize our presence."

In summary, the alliance security dilemma hypothesis, standing alone, is insufficient to explain the gradual shift to European cooperative behavior. However, elements of this proposition are clearly evident in the collective decision-making process which led to the formal WEU agreement. In short, while the effect of a change in threat perception played the predominate role in producing cooperative behavior (external threat hypothesis), the United States, to a lesser degree, was able, through stepped-up coercive diplomacy, to make the threat of noncooperation (potential abandonment) outweigh the costs of cooperation (potential entrapment) (causal statement No. 2 for cooperation).

Collective Action

There is little evidence to support the collective action hypothesis that cooperative behavior emerged because the United States increased its ability (and willingness) to provide the "public good" produced by NATO and that the Europeans benefited accordingly. In fact, the overall U.S. contribution to the public good was in a state of decline as evidenced by the defense budget entering its fourth year of steady reductions at the height of the Persian Gulf. Additionally, the fact that the United States spends 6.7% of

its GNP on defense while the European allies allocate an average of 3.7% (and many have not fulfilled their 1984 undertaking to increase military expenditures by 3% per annum) can at times "bring grist to the mill of those who advocate reducing American expenditures on the defense of Europe."¹⁰⁷ Most theorists of international relations would agree that a democratic country's ability to participate in a policy of collective defense, let alone fighting a war, depends, to a large extent, on the nature of its social consensus. A sharp rise in economic constraints or a severe lack of resources is liable to endanger that consensus.

Furthermore, development of tensions in the Persian Gulf led the United States not only to consider sending naval forces to the region, but also to consider the possibility of deploying ground forces in the event of an Iranian or Soviet thrust into the vital oil fields.¹⁰⁸ The withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in mid-1988 carried with it the possibility of greater Soviet freedom of action with respect to the Middle East. Faced with scarce resources, the United States increased its emphasis on the strategy of "discriminate deterrence" (with the concomitant emphasis on the criticality and security of the Persian Gulf

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Western European Union, Thirty-Fourth Ordinary Session, Document No. 1137, p. 73.

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Ibid., p. 22.

109
region) to effectively meet its global commitments. This renewed emphasis on discriminate deterrence raised the perennial European fear regarding the permanency of American forces stationed in Europe -- a part of which in time of crisis could be sent (on short notice) to the Persian Gulf thereby "weakening the Western system in Europe just when there was a threat to peace and necessitating the redeployment of European contingents in NATO." 110

This renewed emphasis on discriminate deterrence, declining defense expenditures, and the revival of Congressional burden-sharing rhetoric can hardly be interpreted as contributing to the "public good" of the alliance. Theoretically, if the Europeans were in fact free riding, then we would expect to see them compensate (in some manner) for the decreasing U.S. contribution to European conventional defense. 111 Based on the available evidence, no such rise in European defense spending occurred. It might even be argued, that the European allies entered into a tacit agreement to support the U.S. reflagging policy precisely because the U.S. contribution was perceived as declining. In other words, the collective European

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Discriminate Deterrence: Report of the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy (Washington: U.S. Gov't. Print. Off., 1988), pp. 13-22.

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Western European Union, Document No. 1137, p. 22.

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Rupchan, p. 341.

objective was not to free ride on the alliance leader, but rather to secure the trans-atlantic political link. In summary, there remains little evidence to support the collective action proposition that cooperative behavior emerged because the alliance leader increased its willingness and ability to provide the "public good" produced by the alliance and that the Europeans benefited accordingly.

Domestic Politics

To prove this hypothesis it is necessary to show that cooperation on the reflagging policy emerged because of domestic political pressure. In other words, European and U.S. legislative bodies and their respective publics opted to support the Reagan administration's policy. As with the collective action hypothesis, there is little evidence to support the proposition that cooperative behavior between the United States and the European allies emerged due to domestic political pressure from either side of the Atlantic. American public opinion reflected little support for a unilateral overseas venture while European public opinion consistently "sought to preserve the uniquely European credentials of the operation."¹¹²

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Davis and George, p. 79.

According to public opinion polls, the American people remained sharply divided over the Administration's reflagging proposal with approval (47 percent) barely outweighing disapproval (40 percent) (see Table 14). As expected, there was a clear political dimension to the public's assessment of the reflagging proposal with Republicans favoring the plan by a 2-to-1 ratio and Democrats opposing it by a 5-to-3 margin.

As mentioned above, there is, however, ample evidence to suggest that Congressional and to some extent public opinion, forced the Reagan administration to raise the issue of allied support at the NATO NAC and DPC levels as well as through State Department diplomatic channels in the respective European capitals. Without question, U.S. public and Congressional sentiment strongly favored a more equitable European share of the defense burden in the Gulf primarily due to Europe's greater dependence on Persian Gulf oil. However, this Congressional and public pressure was applied after the decision to reflag (on a unilateral basis) had been made and was more in response to a perceived lack of allied support in the initial stage of the operation rather than in response to the original reflagging decision.

Once again, European parliamentary and public opinion split down traditional party lines but more importantly reflected the uniquely European aspects of the operation and tended to downplay the American connection. An examination

TABLE 14
PERSIAN GULF INITIATIVE PUBLIC OPINION (U.S.)

ESCORT KUWAITI TANKERS				
Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the Reagan Administration's plan to allow Kuwaiti oil tankers to fly the American flag and for U.S. Navy ships to escort these vessels through the Persian Gulf?				
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Dis- approve</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	
June 8	47%	40%	13%	
July 10	42	38	20	
August 24	46	40	14	
October 23	56	30	14	

Question: As I read you some statements, please tell me whether you think each one is a very important, fairly important, or not an important reason for the United States to increase its military presence in the Persian Gulf.				
	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Fairly Important</u>	<u>Not Important</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Prevent Soviet Expansion	53%	31%	10%	6%
Protect U.S. Interests	50	34	10	6
Ensure Flow of Oil	51	32	11	6
Bolster American Prestige	23	33	37	7

SOURCE: The Gallup Report, June 1987, Report No. 261; July 1987, Report No. 262; November 1987, Report No. 266.

of the British, Dutch, and Belgian connection helps place the uniquely European credentials of the cooperative effort in perspective: for example, the Belgian parliamentary hearings held on 17 September in the wake of the government's decision to dispatch minesweepers revealed a division of the opposition parties along regional and linguistic lines with the strongest negative reaction coming from the Flemish Socialist Party and the Flemish Nationalist Volksunie Party. Spokesmen for the majority parties all stressed that sending minesweepers to the Gulf was an opportunity to demonstrate not only Belgian willingness to defend vital European interests in the Gulf, but also an opportunity to take an all important first step toward a new and uniquely European defense policy -- a clear reference to the role played by the WEU in forging a cooperative agreement as well as an equally clear attempt to politically distance the collective
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European decision from U.S. policy.

Likewise, securing parliamentary approval in the Netherlands hinged on providing protection for Dutch minesweepers about to operate in a potentially hostile air environment and in placating the public's desire to preserve the European nature of the coordinated effort. On 11 September, a meeting took place in London at which the coordination of British, Dutch and Belgian MCM duties were

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"The Navy Ready for the Gulf," De Morgen, 10 September 1987.

formalized. As Davis and George correctly point out:

It [the meeting] proved vital to the securing of Parliamentary approval in the Netherlands. Not only did the Dutch MCM vessels require guaranteed protection from the Royal Navy in potentially hostile air environment, but public opinion also sought to preserve the uniquely "European" credentials of the operation. Invoking the need to protect the integrity of international shipping was more important than explicitly talking of attempts to deflect broader U.S. criticisms of NATO's overall utility.¹¹⁴

These public concerns, rather than any long-range commitment to a revamping of European out-of-area military responsibilities, provided the basis for a coalition of Christian Democrats and Liberals to defeat the opposition Labor Party thereby securing parliamentary approval on 11 September to send naval forces to the Gulf. This political rationale also helped avoid Iranian accusations that the "Europeans were simply obeying the call of their senior ally."¹¹⁵

In summary, there is little evidence to support the domestic politics proposition that the European governments supported the U.S. reflagging policy because their respective publics pressured them to do so. In fact, the available evidence suggests that European domestic factors favored sending naval forces to the Gulf not as an explicit

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Davis and George, p. 79.

¹¹⁵

Ibid.

demonstration of support for the American policy, but rather as a means of protecting individual national and to some extent collective European interests.

Summary of Findings

The noncooperative behavior exhibited by the NATO allies in the period between March and August of 1987 can best be explained through an application of the noncooperative aspects of the external threat and alliance security dilemma hypotheses. The Europeans failed to support the reflagging policy at this stage because they did not perceive the external threat to their interests serious enough to warrant direct participation. The absence of a patent military threat to European interests -- like the enduring bond created by the military might of the Warsaw Pact in Central Europe -- precluded the creation of a similar bond in the coordination of Persian Gulf policy. 116 Only in certain benign circumstances -- like the Red Sea mine-clearance operation in 1984 -- could out-of-area cooperation between the allies take place.

Furthermore, the nature of European interests in the Gulf region precluded the establishment of a cooperative military framework within which the Gulf security problem could be addressed: for example, up until July of 1987, Iran

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Ibid., p. 75.

had been France's largest supplier of oil and France was Iraq's principle trading partner and supplier of advanced military equipment. The complexity of France's position was further compounded by the so-called "Affaire Luchaire" in which it was revealed that France had sold substantial quantities of 155mm ammunition to Iran in exchange for French hostages in Lebanon¹¹⁷ Given the complexity of these interests, it does not take a lot of political sophistication to understand why France was reluctant to align itself with the policies of "outside powers" as the Persian Gulf crisis unfolded in late spring and early summer of 1987. As will be demonstrated later in this study, it was not until the balance of French interests shifted away from Iran in the wake of the Gorji affair that France finally sought "accommodation with its Western neighbors' policies."¹¹⁸

Likewise, the mission of Britain's Armilla Patrol had been to "accompany British merchant vessels into the Gulf as a measure of reassurance to U.K. maritime and insurance interests."¹¹⁹ The U.K. naval commanders on the scene had, over the years, developed good working relations with the

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

regular Iranian Navy (as opposed to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Navy) who in turn permitted British merchant ships to pass unscathed. Therefore,

In order to continue existing relations with the littoral states unchanged, the Royal Navy vessels avoided permanent basing arrangements in the area, and were rotated on and off station from home ports in the United Kingdom. Although this would require nine ships -- 18% of the Royal Navy's surface combatant strength -- the policy was seen in London as satisfactory.¹²⁰

Finally, the allies failed to support the U.S. reflagging policy because, again at this juncture, U.S. pressure in the form of "coercive diplomacy" was not yet strong enough to force European compliance. The costs associated with potential U.S. retaliation for European unwillingness simply did not outweigh the costs of outwardly supporting the policy. In short, the coercive means chosen by the United States -- informal State and Defense Department requests -- were of insufficient strength to make the costs of noncooperation (potential abandonment) outweigh the costs of cooperation (potential entrapment).

Conversely, the preceding analysis on cooperative behavior clearly delineates elements of the external threat and alliance security dilemma hypotheses merging to

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Ibid. As Davis and George point out, Iran, due to its almost total reliance on the Strait of Hormuz for its oil exports, was actually undercutting international spot market prices to attract customers to the war zone and offering discount insurance rates to offset the effect of Iraqi air attacks on its facilities.

effect a shift in the sovereign yet collective European position. While each European ally expressed independent and sovereign reasons for contributing forces to the Gulf operation, the combined effect of this shift in position produced political cooperation resulting in operational cooperation inside the Gulf.

As outlined above, a series of events beginning in mid-August of 1987 in the Persian Gulf altered the external threat perception of each ally and precipitated a gradual shift in the collective European position. The British position shifted after the Texaco Caribbean tanker was mined in the Gulf of Oman. The following day, France expressed a similar concern for protecting shipping in international waters and announced that increased measures to protect French shipping would be implemented. Similarly, the combined effect of the failure of U.S. Resolution 598 to take hold and the Iranian attack on the Italian merchant ship Jolly Robino resulted in the Italian government, under parliamentary pressure, to send an Italian naval force to the Gulf. The West German government, sensing this shift in position, agreed to transfer naval forces to the Mediterranean to compensate for the absences created by measures taken in the Gulf by its NATO allies.

The emerging consensus of immediate interests manifested itself in a consultative forum created by the WEU. While European naval support in the Gulf remained

essentially national in nature, they were conducted on the basis of WEU political consultations. The growing common concern among alliance members about the increasing threats to Western interests led to gradually increasing cooperation and tacit support for the U.S. reflagging operation. Finally, added to this altered threat perception were increased American efforts to secure European support based on a shift in U.S. policy emphasis to protecting freedom of navigation as a matter of concern for all nations.

In the final analysis, the political and operational agreement reached by the Alliance members was the direct result of altered threat perceptions coupled with the concomitant application of coercive pressure by the Alliance leader. While the use of a single case study can neither validate nor invalidate the applicability of these four hypotheses to other Alliance issues, several general conclusions regarding the cooperative and noncooperative aspects of alliance behavior can be made: first, political cooperation can be best explained by a combination of balance-of-power (external threat) and systemic (alliance security dilemma) models while economic cooperation is "determined by second image or domestic considerations."¹²¹ As George Liska points out (using economic terminology), "alliances aim at maximizing gains and sharing

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Kupchan, p. 345.

liabilities." Therefore, cooperative behavior exists when alliance members are able to maintain a "favorable balance of gains to liabilities for their members." In other words:

Alignment becomes a rational policy when an external force threatens the nation with greater liabilities than those entailed by collaboration. The primary collective benefit which an alliance can provide its members is through the aggregation of group resources in defense against the common enemy. Thus, alliance members are more likely to engage in collaborative behavior and exhibit consensus with their allies on basic issues during time of external threat than during periods of relative detente.¹²⁴

Second, this analysis shows that strong leadership and consultation are critical factors in producing alliance cohesion. The alliance security dilemma hypothesis "suggests that strong U.S. leadership enhances America's ability to have credible threats of abandonment and therefore increases the likelihood of cooperative outcomes." Similarly, a lack of strong leadership or a decline in the U.S. military contribution to the Alliance may also strengthen alliance cohesion by raising the threat

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Liska, p. 26.

¹²³Ole Holsti, et al., Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances, (New York: Wiley, 1973), p. 93.

124

Ibid.

¹²⁵Kupchan, p. 346.

of abandonment and increasing interdependence among the less
126
dominate members.

There remains little question that the NATO allies will continue to share common interests and objectives in regions of the world outside the traditional confines of the Alliance. The recent events in the Persian Gulf have indicated an increased willingness of the European allies to take action outside the NATO area. However, as this analysis clearly demonstrates, any future out-of-area efforts will more than likely remain within a framework not
127
identified with the Alliance.

As mentioned previously, the implications for U.S. policy of inserting forces and then debating the strategy remain clear: the political failure to obtain even a token commitment of assistance from U.S. allies prior to the public endorsement of Kuwait's reflagging request illustrates another case in which the failure to think through policy manifested itself. By framing the initial protection of shipping plan in unilateral terms and then pursuing diplomatic efforts to enlarge the commitment into a multilateral operation by securing allied assistance the United States forced a showdown with its allies over who had the greater share of responsibility in protecting Western

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Ibid.

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Davis and George, p. 81.

oil supplies. For the Europeans, the disruption of less than 1% of the oil flow simply did not justify the dispatch of scarce resources to the Gulf. It was not until several European nations perceived the threat to their interests as substantial that assistance was finally provided and the operation became (de facto) multilateral.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Critical analysis is not just an evaluation of the means actually employed, but of all possible means -- which first have to be formulated, that is, invented. One can, after all, not condemn a method without being able to suggest a better alternative.¹

von Clausewitz, On War, 1831

Regional Strategies: Problems and Perceptions

"Foreign policy," wrote Walter Lippmann in 1943, "consists in bringing into balance, with a comfortable surplus of power in reserve, the nation's commitments and the nation's power." If the balance between ends and means remains prudent, then the foreign policy will gain public support and stand a good chance of success. However, if commitments exceed the nation's power, then "insolvency" results which foments deep domestic political divisions thereby lessening the chance for achieving that often elusive foreign policy "victory." This is precisely the problem the United States faced in attempting to formulate and conduct its Persian Gulf reflagging policy and strategy. The ability effectively to manage the foreign policy and strategy formulation process -- to see relationships between ends and means, objectives and capabilities, aspirations and interests, and short-term and long-term priorities -- will

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von Clausewitz, p. 161.

remain the critical task facing the United States in any future formulation and conduct of a Persian Gulf policy. Moreover, if the tensions created by the Cold War continue to recede in the months and years ahead, then this ability effectively to manage the foreign policy and strategy formulation process will become even more critical to the protection of the nation's vital interests.

Why then, in the macro sense, has the United States found it so difficult to articulate and then implement a well-balanced and sound policy for the Gulf region? The answer, quite frankly, lies in America's globalist orientation: the extension of American power into the Gulf (and all peripheral regions for that matter) is based upon a perception of global U.S.-Soviet competition. In the most recent manifestation of this phenomenon, Caspar Weinberger, in his recently published memoir, Fighting For Peace, clearly illustrates this point with respect to the reflagging operation by tersely pointing out that it was "not in our interest for Soviet forces to move into an area that was so vital to us . . . they would gain a tremendous strategic advantage that I did not want them to have."² According to the former Secretary of Defense, the threat to U.S. interests posed by the Soviets escorting Kuwaiti

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Caspar W. Weinberger, Fighting For Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon, (New York: Warner Books, 1990), p. 389.

tankers was a major point in his calculus. Simply put, containment has been the primordial and galvanizing concept shaping not only U.S. global security policies but regional security policies as well.³

The United States, for obvious reasons, has based its global national security policy, doctrine, force structure, and contingency planning on the concept of containment. However, as one analyst correctly points out, the applicability of containment to the periphery assumes two preconditions:

First, the United States must be confronting either Soviet forces or Soviet ideology. Second, the threat to U.S. interests must take the form of a deterrable event -- one that can be avoided by the threat to use or the use of military force.⁴

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As Charles Kupchan demonstrates, shifts in U.S. security policy toward the Middle East in general and the Gulf region in particular have a direct relationship to the perceived requirements of containment:

In the 1940's and 1950's, the Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines were responses to the ideological challenges posed by the Soviets. In the late 1960's and 1970's, the United States engaged in an arms sales race with the Soviet Union to preserve the military superiority of pro-Western states and to counter the Soviet search for regional surrogates. Since 1979, brought about by a shift in U.S. perceptions of the direct Soviet threat to Southwest Asia, the central focus of U.S. policy has been to deter a Soviet move into the Gulf.

For additional information see, Charles A. Kupchan, The Persian Gulf and the West: The Dilemmas of Security (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1988), p. 219.

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Kupchan, p. 219.

As the United States has often (and painfully) found out, many situations and events in the periphery simply do not meet these two preconditions. For example, there are many threats to U.S. economic, political and strategic interests in the Gulf region which simply are not related to Soviet ideology or even Soviet military power. Likewise, the threat of U.S. intervention can not deter the spread of Islamic fundamentalism or Arab nationalism nor can it [intervention] prevent a coup or civil rebellion in the region.⁵ This position, of course, does not discount the need to confront the Soviet military or political threat to the moderate Arab Gulf states. It merely points out the need to reexamine the means by which to counter such a threat. As Charles Kupchan quite clearly points out:

Reliance on containment has narrowed the scope of America's vision; regional considerations have been subsumed within concern about the Kremlin's intentions. This has led to the formulation of a security policy that rests on unreliable, if not unsound, political foundations.⁶

This global bias contained within U.S. regional security policies has been shaped by both cognitive and bureaucratic factors inherent to the American foreign policy decision-making process. Cognitive factors, such as paying selective attention to the external environment, distorting

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Ibid. p.220.

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Ibid.

incoming information, and failure to consider all available options, played a significant role in arriving at the decision to reflag the Kuwaiti tankers.⁷ As the majority of decision making studies have shown:

Rather than seeking initiatives crafted for the crisis at hand, decision-makers minimize uncertainty by altering their perceptions of the crisis until it appears to be more manageable within the context of a fixed repertoire of options and beliefs.⁸

These cognitive tendencies, as Robert Jervis contends, cause decision-makers "to fit incoming information into pre-existing beliefs and to perceive what they expect to be there," as well as ignoring "information that does not fit, twist it so that it confirms, or at least does not contradict, our beliefs, and deny its validity."⁹

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Ibid., p. 221.

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Ibid. For a detailed analysis of these cognitive processes, the reader is referred to the following seminal studies: John D. Steinbruner, The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), especially Chapter Four on "Cognitive Processes"; Irving Janis and Leon Mann, Decision Making: A Psychological Analysis of Conflict, Choice and Commitment, (New York: Free Press, 1977), especially Part Two on "Hot Cognitive Processes"; Richard Ned Lebow, Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crises, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), especially Chapter Five on "Cognitive Closure and Crisis Politics"; Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics, especially Chapter Four on "Cognitive Consistency and the Interaction Between Theory and Data"; For an indepth review of the pertinent literature on the decision-making process, see: Pfaltzgraff and Dougherty, Contending Theories of International Relations, Chapter Eleven on "Decision-Making Theories."

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Jervis, p. 143.

By viewing the "spill-over" effect of the Iran-Iraq war and its impact on Kuwaiti shipping in East-West terms, U.S. decision-makers fit the reflagging contingency into a national security apparatus designed to meet the challenge of the more familiar and definable Soviet threat. In other words, the prospect of U.S.-Soviet confrontation in the Gulf was a more "definable and familiar threat, one that fit neatly into the policy repertoire that has emerged to¹⁰ implement containment."

Organizational structures and bureaucratic factors also played a role in framing the reflagging policy in East-West terms. In Fighting For Peace Weinberger, quite candidly, laid out the interagency battle over reflagging as "DOD and NSC for;¹¹ State against." Moreover, he stated somewhat

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Kupchan, p. 222. In the reflagging case, the primacy of containment -- preventing the Soviet Union from filling the proverbial "vacuum" in the Gulf -- and U.S. perceptions regarding regional security led decision-makers to view the crisis within an East-West framework. The spill-over from the Iran-Iraq war and the possibility of Soviet support for Kuwait produced fear and frustration within the political-military decision-making arena in Washington, D.C. This in turn led to cognitive failures that caused decision-makers to pay selective attention to incoming information from the Gulf and to zero in on the perennial Soviet threat. Kupchan notes that this same process of cognitive bias explains why decision-makers, during the 1979 Iran crisis "initially perceived accurately the gravity of developments in Iran on their own terms, but then began to concentrate on the potential for Soviet manipulation or penetration well before the invasion of Afghanistan." (p. 223)

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Weinberger, p. 396.

tersely that George Shultz "did not share my enthusiasm for
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this mission." As Kupchan notes:

Generalists, who are concerned primarily with broader East-West issues, dominate the NSC and the top echelon of decision-making. The State Department, on the other hand, contains many career regional experts concerned mainly with studying, and interpreting local dynamics in the Middle East.¹³

Similarly, the military has traditionally resisted the formation of regionally deployable strike forces as they [the strike forces] have a tendency to divert scarce resources from the primary mission of deterring and if necessary fighting the Soviets on a global basis. Again, Weinberger, in his memoirs, provides tangible evidence for this phenomenon:

Initially, the Navy was far from enthusiastic about this operation, fearing that it would divert a large number of its forces from existing, long-term commitments; that it would be expensive, taking funds from projects the Navy cherished; and that it might result in some loss of life and ships.¹⁴

The U.S. Navy's resistance to the Persian Gulf operation also stemmed from both strategic and tactical (ROE) considerations. From the strategic perspective, former Secretary of the Navy James Webb, in an interview with The Journal of Defense and Diplomacy, questioned the lack of clearly defined political objectives and the

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Ibid., p. 397.

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Kupchan, p. 225.

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Weinberger, p. 398.

American penchant for the "surgical" use of the military as a means to achieve those goals. Invoking the lessons from Vietnam, Webb, while in office, was gravely concerned over the way in which the military force structure was growing event by event in the Persian Gulf:

You're going to do a security patrol. You put a helicopter squadron in. Then you're going to do a security patrol to protect the helicopter. Then the security patrol hits. Then you're going to bring in an artillery unit to protect the security patrol. Then the artillery battery gets hit. Then you're going to put in fixed air. Etcetera, etcetera. Pretty soon you've got this tremendous support structure that has grown because of tactical events without clear articulation of what you're doing.¹⁵

Webb points out that while the United States did extremely well militarily in Vietnam -- "If you don't believe it, go to Hanoi and try to find someone my age" -- we failed to work under an umbrella of clearly stated goals. Moreover, Webb, in reference to the Persian Gulf operation, raises the vital question of how U.S. military force should be used in a non-declared war environment. His own response is characteristically blunt:

My personal view is you should be very careful about when you use military force. But when you use military force you should use it in a massive way.¹⁶

Ironically, while in office, Webb accused Weinberger of violating his own prerequisites for combat (see Table 9).

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"Interview with the former Secretary of the Navy James H. Webb," The Journal of Defense and Diplomacy, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1988, p. 24.

16

Ibid.

Weinberger's response that we are "not now engaged in 'combat'," provides clear evidence of the continuing dysfunction within the crisis decision-making process over the appropriate use of force.¹⁷ This seemingly bizarre political debate over the precise definition of "combat" reflects the legalistic approach American policymakers traditionally take in attempting to resolve thorny international political and diplomatic problems -- an approach that often leaves the implementers of the policy in various stages of disbelief. While low-intensity conflict may indeed be at the low end of the spectrum of violence, quibbling over what is or is not "combat" seems almost surrealistic to the U.S. helicopter pilot taking hits in his aircraft from gunners on Iranian oil platforms.¹⁸

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Weinberger, p. 402.

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This legalistic approach to the role force plays in achieving political objectives took an even more bizarre twist when the question of awarding personal decorations and campaign medals to U.S. personnel serving in the Gulf came up. When asked by a U.S. Navy sailor if such awards would be forthcoming, Weinberger responded that he thought they would:

But then I was stopped by the thought that bestowing decorations might give some credence to the Congressional voices arguing that this was a combat zone. I was hardly eager to give ammunition to those who wished to invoke the war powers resolution.

Ironically, both hazardous duty pay ("combat pay") and decorations were ultimately authorized for those servicemen and women serving in the Gulf. For more information see: Weinberger, Fighting For Peace, p. 417.

The U.S. Navy's resistance to the operation was also apparent at the tactical level. Some naval commanders flatly stated that "the rules of engagement were not to our liking . . ."¹⁹ Interestingly, in an insightful assessment of Iran's decision to mine the Gulf in 1987, former Commander of the U.S. Middle East Force, Rear Admiral Harold Bernsen, concluded that Iran looked at the U.S. involvement in Beirut and indecision in Washington and decided it "had 50-50 chance that the United States would leave as a result . . . By mining the Iranian's decided they would be willing to be hit by carrier air . . . the carrier was no longer a 100% deterrent."²⁰ The Navy's veiled objection to the policy of "measured" or "proportional" response at the tactical level to the Iranian minelaying was fairly candid and straightforward: the then Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Air Warfare, Vice Admiral Robert Dunn, commented that "we [the Navy] don't believe in measured response either . . . But we're responsive to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who's responsible to a civilian government."²¹ In a further clarification of this

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Vice Admiral John H. Fetterman, "Situation Report: COMNAVAIRPAC," Wings of Gold, Summer 1990.

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Laura D. Johnston, "Professional Seminar Series Report: Naval Aviation Symposium, 1988," Proceedings, July 1988, p. 13.

21

Ibid.

point, Vice Admiral Richard Dunleavy, then serving as Commander Naval Air Forces Atlantic Fleet, when asked why the Navy does not believe in proportional response stated tersely:

You lose. The longer answer is that we've had a sad experience with [it] . . . certainly including Vietnam, where the response was proportional to a fault, and the fault ended up being losing the war. We don't want to do that again.²²

As with the Iran crisis eight years earlier, these differing organizational perspectives complicated the formulation of a balanced and coherent reflagging policy. As the tanker war in the Gulf intensified and the dynamics of the Iran-Iraq war began to shift in favor of Iran (all in the spring and summer of 1987), so the domestic political pressure for some form of U.S. response -- ranging from do nothing to intervene -- increased within the electorate. This in turn led to a shift in the decision-making process that favored generalist inputs from Defense and NSC rather than accepting the advice of the regional experts in the State Department. As Kupchan concludes based on U.S. experiences with previous Middle Eastern crises, "it is precisely during these periods of crisis that stress-induced cognitive biases favoring focus on the Soviet threat would be most pronounced among top decision-makers, widening the

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Ibid.

rift with regional experts." Given Sadaam Hussein's recent sabre-rattling boasts to destroy half of Israel with ballistic missiles armed with chemical warheads, his re-harboring of the Middle East's most notorious and cut-throat terrorists, and his stunning 2 August, 1990 invasion of Kuwait, one can not help but ponder over the regional expert's warnings regarding the long-term ramifications of the 1987-88 U.S. decision to "tilt" toward Iraq in its confrontation with Iran. In what will probably remain a classic, however twisted and ruthless, demonstration of coercive diplomacy, Hussein -- now labelled the "crude enforcer" by the Western press -- sent a clear and unambiguous signal to the world community of his intention to solve the "Kuwaiti problem": "Iraqis will not forget the saying that cutting necks is better than cutting means of living . . . O God Almighty, be witness that we have warned them!" Within days of this warning, Iraqi -- rather than Soviet or even Iranian -- tanks rolled into Kuwait City making the perennial fear of Soviet or Iranian domination of the world's richest oil producing region seem like a cruel postscript to the American-Kuwaiti reflagging operation.

In the aftermath of Iraq 's blitzkrieg invasion of oil-rich Kuwait, Patrick J. Buchanan wrote that "Saddam Hussein

has introduced us to the new realities of the Near East." Realities which question whether or not the Carter Doctrine and Reagan corollary remain applicable to the region. Ironically, the balance of power in the Persian Gulf has shifted decisively in favor of Iraq. Incredibly, since the so-called moderate Arab Gulf states have chosen not to adequately rearm, the long-term rearming of Iran -- the only regional power with the requisite demographics and resources -- may be the only viable way to reintroduce equilibrium into the region. The political ramifications of restoring the balance of power in this manner are, of course, mind-boggling.

The failure to think through policy also manifested itself in the way in which the United States framed the initial protection of shipping plan in unilateral terms and then pursued diplomatic efforts to enlarge the commitment into a collective operation by pursuing allied assistance. The oscillation between unilateral and collective approaches to Gulf security is nothing new within the Atlantic alliance. As former British Prime Minister Edward Heath remarked on the occasion of the 1979-1980 Gulf crisis:

We [NATO] have to ensure that when we make a strategic decision which is announced, like the fact that the Gulf is a vital interest of the Alliance, we have also got the resources to carry

through the necessary defence of the area if it is to be required.²⁴

Given the inherent political and economic limitations within the Alliance framework, it is not difficult to grasp the fact that the European government's simply disagreed with the United States regarding the gravity of the threat in the Gulf and how best to confront it. In short, the political implications of joint naval operations in the Gulf were not properly factored into the formative stages of the U.S. reflagging policy.

The gradual shift of the European position to that of tacit support for the reflagging operation was a clear manifestation of the perennial West European concern about the danger of an American drift toward some form of isolationism or even into a Western hemisphere form of continentalism thereby leaving the Europeans to fend for themselves. The revival of the WEU as first a consultative forum on the out-of-area issue and then as a sort of operational coordinating agency, served as the means by which the West Europeans could respond to increasing U.S. pressure without forfeiting the individual national interest and sovereignty issues.

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Ibid., p. 195; for a detailed discussion of allied cooperative efforts in Southwest Asia in the wake of the 1980 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, particularly from the British perspective, see: U.K. House of Commons, Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion and its Consequences for British Policy, Fifth Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, 1980 (London: HMSO, 1980).

Clearly, both the United States and its West European allies shared common interests in providing for the security of the Persian Gulf. Similarly, both were well aware of the need for a cooperative approach to solving the dilemmas of Persian Gulf security. Where each side diverged on the issue, however, was in the realm of the means by which to address Gulf security. The analogy to the previous confrontation within the Alliance over the RDF is striking:

The problem was that each had a differing conception of the benefits to be derived from a collective stance. The United States wanted the autonomy of unilateral action, but also sought the legitimacy and military convenience (compensation, strategic access) associated with alliance-wide cooperation. The Europeans desired the global influence and added capability of a collective stance, yet, within the context of an alliance dominated by the United States, were unwilling to sacrifice the political legitimacy and sovereignty associated with a unilateral (or a European) approach.²⁵

As the United States painfully found, the pursuit of shared interests in the Persian Gulf between alliance members became subsumed within the European context of individual national interests. As previous plans to address Gulf security within the Alliance framework have demonstrated, it is precisely this tension between the "expectations of cooperation and the reality of political limitations" that led to the oscillation between the initial unilateral

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Kupchan, p. 228.

American approach and the collective European approach to
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the reflagging operation.

Alternative Strategies

The debate over the use of U.S. forces to protect U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf is now legion. A veritable cottage industry has sprung up providing masses of literature on the structure, balance, capabilities and limitations to the military force required in seeking political ends in the Gulf region. While the debate over U.S. world-wide operational commitments has been raging since the end of World War II, it has recently been refocused due to a change in the strategic context of the debate:

The world has become increasingly complex, and there has been both a real and a relative decline in U.S. capabilities to deal with those complexities. Furthermore, there has been a dramatic increase in Soviet ability to project power beyond Europe and a growing ability by a number of Third World states to use military and political power to challenge the United States. This has reduced U.S. influence and increased the need for flexibility and subtlety in response.²⁷

According to some strategists, a cursory inspection of U.S. involvement in the region can allow one to conclude

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Ibid., p. 229.

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William J. Olson, "Alternative Strategies for Southwest Asia," William J. Olson, ed., U.S. Strategic Interests in the Gulf Region (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), p. 203.

that the formulation of U.S. policy has been mainly reactive "in that events have driven the development of policy rather than a systematic effort to develop policy in relation to interests."²⁸ Citing a policy that has fluctuated between neglect and overreaction, they contend that policy for the Gulf region has been the result of the Soviets failure to withdraw from Iran at the end of the Second World War, followed by the oil crises of 1973 and 1979, the fall of the shah, and the latest "rude awakening," the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq War. Additionally, adherence to the often-heard premise that U.S. interests exceed capabilities when combined with the formulation of a priority-based defense strategy, may preclude a major²⁹ unilateral military presence in the Persian Gulf.

Perhaps the most salient example of this force-strategy mismatch can be seen in General Sir John Hackett's essay on the military requirements for protecting Persian Gulf oil supplies. In his essay, Hackett attempts to quantify the requirements for protecting these supplies by defining the objective area and then the actual military objective of such an operation:

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

In choosing an area of operations it would first be necessary very clearly to specify the requirement. This can be identified in four degrees:

- to supply U.S. needs alone;
- to supply U.S. needs plus those of Japan;
- to supply U.S. needs plus those of NATO allies;
- to supply U.S. needs plus those of NATO allies and Japan.

Such operations could only be said to have succeeded if they satisfied five requirements:

- to seize the vital oil installations virtually intact;
- to secure them for weeks, months and even years;
- to restore wrecked resources rapidly;
- to operate installations with little or no co-operation from the owners;
- to guarantee the safe passage of petroleum products from the area and supplies to it.³⁰

Hackett also develops a test case for defense of the "Saudi core area" by U.S. armed forces and points out that the limitations imposed by distance, limited resources, lack of local facilities, refueling and overflight rights, no guarantee of access to the region, and the harshness of the physical environment all combine to impose significant obstacles to the development of a sound security policy let alone the employment of military force. He concludes by

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Sir John Hackett, "Protecting Oil Supplies: The Military Requirements," Adelphi Papers, No. 166, London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, 1981, pp. 42-43.

noting, "it would be idle to pretend that there are not
truly formidable difficulties to be faced here."³¹

What options then are available to U.S. policymakers in sorting out this force-strategy mismatch? A comparison of several of the proposed alternative strategies may be helpful in placing the problem in its proper context. These options include a return to the status quo, sharing the defense burden with those countries with the heaviest dependence on oil, or going it alone through a unilateral military build-up.

Those in favor of a return to the status quo argue that the main strategic interests of the United States do not lie in the Persian Gulf but rather in Central Europe. They point to the tremendous cost in sustaining naval forces far from even forward bases, the small percentage of U.S. oil originating in the Gulf, and the Soviet reluctance to get bogged-down in another Afghanistan as "good reasons for keeping U.S. involvement on the margin."³² Likewise, proponents of this approach argue that our strong ties to Israel are non-negotiable regardless of the problems this relationship poses for the United States in obtaining regional military cooperation. They also would play down

³¹
Ibid.

³²
William H. Nelson, "Peacekeepers at Risk," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, July 1987, p. 93.

any credible capability of Iran or Iraq to effectively block the Strait of Hormuz to the free flow of oil. Critics maintain that such a policy creates a situation of continually reacting to crises, playing catch-up, deploying large and costly force levels and then standing those forces down only to repeat the cycle at the outbreak of the next crisis.³³

Sharing the defense burden in the Gulf with both our NATO allies and regional friends would be an "excellent way to show both friend and foe the degree of Western resolve in maintaining an open Gulf."³⁴ An allied contingency force, similar to the NATO ACE Mobile Force (AMF) developed to respond to crises on NATO's flanks, would tap its strength from those NATO nations with the heaviest Persian Gulf energy dependence.³⁵ Membership in this force would include Italian, French, British, German, and U.S. forces all with appropriate air, naval, and ground components. To ensure alliance solidarity, NATO would institutionalize a "political consultative mechanism" to deal with Persian Gulf

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

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Snyder, p. 122.

security issues. While the combined forces of the GCC states could not provide for their own defense against Iran or Iraq, continued U.S. security assistance and joint U.S.-GCC operations would also enhance regional security.

Likewise, some strategists call for NATO to assume more of the burden in Europe and the Mediterranean and for Japan to increase the size of its regional defense thereby freeing the United States to increase its presence in the Gulf.³⁷

However, despite the unprecedented show of allied solidarity in the recent mine sweeping operations in the Persian Gulf, experts tend to agree that the Europeans were eager to depict those operations only as a defense of free navigation by countries outside the Iran-Iraq War. Both France and Britain continue to proclaim they were acting individually and not as a part of a U.S. sponsored joint force.³⁸

A unilateral military build-up in the Gulf region by the United States would certainly provide a greater deterrent to aggression and promote regional stability. Some analysts have called for moving CENTCOM to Turkey and formalizing U.S. naval presence in the Indian Ocean by designating those forces as a numbered fleet.

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

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Edward Cody, "W. Europe Nations Demand Halt to Iran Minelaying," The Washington Post, April 20, 1988, p. A1.

Prior to the current crisis, the political inability to station ground forces in the region would have required a permanent build-up in naval forces in the Indian Ocean which would not have drawn-down assets from the Pacific or Atlantic fleets. These forces for use "under a scheme of unilateral U.S. action, must be on-station, readily available as a quick deterrent to conflict or, failing that, to halt the deterioration of the military situation."³⁹

Opponents argue there are simply not enough ships in the fleet to support such a strategy. These opponents contend that without a reduction in commitments elsewhere or a huge increase in operating tempo of existing forces, there is simply no way a unilateral military build-up can reach the size required to effectively protect U.S. interests in the region.

However, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait has forced the moderate Gulf states to reassess the political feasibility of stationing Western ground forces in the region. If, in the aftermath of the current crisis, the political realities on the ground remain favorable toward some form of continued Western presence, then a substantial portion of the present force structure should remain in theatre long enough for an Arab regional security system to be put in place in order to restore the regional balance of power.

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Nelson, p. 95.

Recommendation and Conclusion

A recent study, compiled by William J. Olson, concluded that one of the major problems that U.S. policy has had to contend with in recent years is how to respond to a wide variety of demands with diminishing resources:

The habit has been to try to continue to cover all the bases, to torture the force structure into all the contortions necessary to meet every challenge or potential threat that fertile imaginations can conceive.⁴⁰

While the myriad of strategy permutations continues to expand, one irrefutable yet unsettling fact in the quest to secure U.S. global interests remains clear: U.S. interests now and arguably for the foreseeable future exceed U.S.⁴¹ capabilities. Therefore, what U.S. Persian Gulf policy needs is strategic definition based on a set of world-wide defense priorities: a set of priorities that recognizes the military and political realities which preclude a major⁴² military defense effort in the Gulf. The 1980 decision that in effect placed the Persian Gulf under the U.S. nuclear umbrella failed adequately to address the question of whether or not the United States, lacking sufficient conventional forces, would resort to the use of nuclear weapons over a commodity of a specific economic value. The

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Olson, p. 222.

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Ibid., p. 213.

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Ibid.

emphasis in the Persian Gulf should be on dealing with local threats and challenges and at least a tacit recognition that Third World problems are rapidly becoming a serious threat to U.S. global interests. Once this recognition is incorporated into the strategic thought-process, then the concomitant shift away from seeing all regional entanglements through the U.S.-Soviet perspective can take place.⁴³

This can then be followed by the evolution of a policy and strategy that would allow for a "more sophisticated effort to deal bilaterally with area states on the basis of common interests and problems, and to downplay our own necessary but unshared [with the Third World] preoccupation with the Soviets."⁴⁴ The recent Report of the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy recognized this current state of affairs by noting that while conflicts in the Third World are less threatening than a potential global war with the Soviet Union, they can undermine the ability of the United States to defend its most vital interests.⁴⁵

In the Persian Gulf this bilateral effort can best be accomplished by designing a force structure and doctrine

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

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Fred C. Ikle and Albert Wohlstetter, Discriminate Deterrence, Report of the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy (Washington: January 11, 1988), p. 13.

that can respond to the most likely area of conflict -- conventional conflicts by regimes seeking regional dominance. Without removing the tripwire (and thereby avoiding the "Acheson Syndrome"), U.S. forces should be organized to deal not only with threats to oil field and pipeline security, coups, limited local conflicts, hostage situations, and counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations but also conventional conflicts by regimes seeking regional domination.⁴⁶ The former would require a mix of small, quick reaction forces composed of marine, naval and air elements designed for "advisory missions that developed local capabilities while keeping U.S. presence to a minimum."⁴⁷

The latter would require heavy forces capable of sustaining combat ashore alone for a minimum of sixty days or as long as it would take to augment the local security system with a major joint (or allied) operation composed of additional heavy forces. Recognizing that regional security cannot be externally imposed or successfully concluded without dedicated local support, efforts should be stepped up to encourage the GCC states to increase their own capabilities and to formalize a regional security system

⁴⁶ Olson, p. 215.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 216.

which, when requested, would be augmented by the restructured U.S. forces in the region.

When one widens the focus of analysis from regional to global issues, it becomes readily apparent that the above mentioned problems in U.S. Persian Gulf policy contain unsettling implications for overall U.S. national policy. As the preceding paragraphs have outlined, a restructuring of U.S. forces will have to take place in order to effectively deal with the Persian Gulf problem. However, before this restructuring takes place, several significant yet fundamental changes in U.S. national policy will have to occur. First, the extreme oscillations between Wilsonian idealism and Bismarkian realpolitik ingrained in the traditional formulation of U.S. national policy must, once and for all, be reconciled. These oscillations have produced a huge gap between policy and strategy and even deeper divisions between forces and available resources. Narrowing the gap in this force-strategy mismatch to an acceptable level of risk in relation to our vital national interests will require a recognition by policymakers that, for the foreseeable future, the sum total of the United State's global interests and commitments far exceed the nation's capability to defend them all simultaneously. And if, in the so-called post-Cold War era, the United States continues to eliminate forces, then a concomitant shift in policy to terminate commitments must also be made.

Consequently, this geopolitical fact of life cries out for the need to place priorities in line with capabilities as well as the need to muster the political will and resolve to defend these reordered interests with an appropriate and potent force structure. This strategic redefinition must include an assessment of which national interests are so vital that we must be ready to resort to war if they are threatened; and which interests are no longer vital and their defense can be undertaken by others. Any effort to redefine U.S. vital interests -- those for which we are willing to resort to war -- will more than likely reveal interests that remain essentially what they were when George Kennan first defined them in 1947 as the vital (but vulnerable) industrial centers of North America, Western Europe, and Japan. Since the main threat to the United States today comes from the strategic rocket forces of the Soviet Union, and in the next century from the ballistic missile forces of the Third World -- nuclear and/or chemical -- then ballistic missile defense must be our highest priority followed by the air, naval and ground forces necessary to defend those reordered interests. It remains incumbent upon policymakers to redefine these interests prior to the outbreak of the next crisis or we will continue to have them redefined for us by the likes of future Saddam Husseins.

Secondly, once these choices are made, then the economic and strategic importance of the Persian Gulf must be placed into perspective: Persian Gulf oil is not something for which the United States should be prepared to resort to war. Since the most formidable array of military hardware ever assembled in history remains entrenched in the Central European theatre, the Middle East in general and the Persian Gulf in particular are not the places to defend the West in the event of a global war. In the event of a global crisis, the concept of sequential operations for dealing with the Soviets in corresponding regional crises would be a more prudent strategy to adopt.⁴⁸ Without a clear and well-defined Soviet military threat to the Gulf region, the United States should not place excessive reliance on the use of force to influence events in the region but rely instead on political, economic, and military assistance programs to accomplish that task.⁴⁹ However, in the presence of a clear and well-defined regional threat to the Gulf posed by local regimes seeking regional hegemony, the United States must be prepared to react quickly, decisively, and in cooperation with a restructured regional security system to contain, and if necessary, roll back the threat.

48

Ibid., p. 214.

49

Nuechterlein, p. 18.

Thirdly, any attempt to reformulate a policy for Southwest Asia must include strategies for improving and strengthening the United States' strategic position in the region. To accomplish this task the gap between American globalism and regionalism must be narrowed. The military strategy must be based on the political realities on the ground in the Gulf region. This will require a recognition on the part of U.S. policymakers that the regional problem is a cognitive and perceptual one "deeply rooted in America's approach to regional security in the postwar era."⁵⁰ A policy which is more sensitive to local political considerations and to events that simply cannot be deterred by U.S. military power as well as a policy less focused on containment may be more effective in the long term. Perhaps the simple yet insightful policy advice offered by one regional expert on how to deal effectively with radical political change in Southwest Asia provides the best approach to dealing with the continually shifting political and military dynamics seemingly inherent to the Gulf region: "Accommodating revolutionary states or simply doing nothing, rather than isolating or threatening them, may well be a more productive strategy in the long term"⁵¹ (emphasis added).

50

Kupchan, p. 229.

51

Ibid.

Fourthly, steps should be taken to ameliorate and if possible circumvent the deep rooted perceptual differences between U.S. and West European approaches to the out-of-area security issue. The consultative forum established by the reactivation of the WEU remains a superb place to address regional security concerns in a much less politically charged environment. For the same reason, intra-alliance discussions on out-of-area problems should be removed from the NAC and DPC levels of NATO and placed under a separate council. Such a move would allow policy and strategy recommendations to be formulated and forwarded to the NAC and DPC levels without the unattractive side attraction of divisive (and often times public) political debate.⁵²

Likewise, policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic must recognize the fact that it will remain too politically sensitive to implement regional security strategies within the formal Alliance framework. Therefore, Alliance members should be encouraged to cooperate on regional security matters on a multilateral basis. In more conceptual terms, multilateralism offers a sort of middle ground between unilateralism and collectivism: "It provides the autonomy and sovereignty associated with a unilateral approach without sacrificing the benefits of cooperation."⁵³

52

For further amplification of this point, see Kupchan, pp. 231-232.

53

Ibid.

Fifthly, threats to U.S. interests and strategies designed to protect those interests must be clearly defined and then explained to the American people. As mentioned at the outset of this study, anyone who would take the first step in a conflict without having considered the last step should, as Clausewitz admonished, not be allowed into the Councils of War. This responsibility clearly rests with the Commander-in-Chief. President Reagan's assertion in May of 1987 that "I don't see the danger of war" clearly demonstrates one of the central problems facing American administrations in crisis situations: An unwillingness to give the American people the all-too-often grim facts. "Every time the President explains too little, warns too little, and is too optimistic, he gets in trouble."⁵⁴ Once the President explains the threat, points out the dangers, and systematically educates the American people as to the available courses of action then, and only then, will the public support necessary for successful employment of military force be forthcoming.

Finally, perhaps the key to solving the force-strategy mismatch dilemma with its corresponding spill-over into the Persian Gulf, lies in an all out cooperative effort to eradicate the seemingly inherent contradiction that exists

between military and civilian thinking on when to use force and how much force is appropriate. This "dysfunction" has plagued the national security decision-making process for decades and has been the cause of problems that run the gamut from mere irritants to grave national security crises. While war may indeed be too important to be left to the generals (and admirals), the obverse of this dictum bears investigation. As a recent study clearly points out, just as military leaders have a responsibility to be in tune with political, economic, and social issues, our civilian leadership must also be aware of the intricacies of military operations and, perhaps more importantly the limits of force⁵⁵ in seeking political objectives. Since the primacy of policy in the use of force must remain absolute, then civilian leaders must, as Clausewitz clearly points out, be acutely aware that "policy knows the instrument it means to use" and that "a certain grasp of military affairs is vital⁵⁶ for those in charge of general policy."

While this inherent contradiction by its very nature will probably continue to plague the policy, strategy, and decision-making process, it remains critically incumbent upon both civilian and military leaders to forge an alliance of understanding to ensure the link between military means

⁵⁵
Summers, On Strategy, p. 187.

⁵⁶
von Clausewitz, pp. 606-608.

and political objectives remains prudent, reasonable, and well-thought-out. General Matthew B. Ridgeway's eloquent expression that "the soldier is the statesman's junior partner," drives right to the heart of the matter.

APPENDIX A

U.S. SENATE RESOLUTION 207 RELATING TO A RESOLUTION
OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ

IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE

May 6, 1987

Mr. McCONNELL (for himself, Mr. DELL, Mr. LUGAR, and Mr. BOSCHWITZ) submitted the following resolution which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Relating to a resolution of the conflict
between Iran and Iraq

Whereas, the continuation of the Iran-Iraq war threatens the security and stability of all states in the Persian Gulf;

Whereas, stability in the Gulf and the flow of oil is critical to world trade and the economic health of the West;

Whereas, the conflict between Iran and Iraq threatens U.S. strategic and political interests in the region;

Whereas, the conflict threatens international commercial shipping interests and activities;

Whereas, the Iran-Iraq war has continued seven years with more than 1,000,000 casualties;

It is resolved by the Senate That the Senate,

(1) Supports an immediate cease-fire; and

(2) Supports the total, unconditional withdrawal of
of both Iran and Iraq to internationally recognized
boundaries; and

(3) Endorses the peaceful resolution of this conflict
under the auspices of the United Nations or other
international organization or party; and

(4) Encourages all governments to refrain from
providing military assistance to either party refusing to
participate in negotiations leading to a peaceful resolution
of the war; and

(5) Urges strict observance of international
humanitarian law by both sides and recommends a U.S.
contribution to the U.S. International Committee for the Red
Cross Special Appeal for Prisoners of War; and

(6) Recognizes that stability and security in the
Persian Gulf will only be achieved if Iran and Iraq are at
peace and agree not to interfere in the affairs of other
nations through military action or the support of terrorism.

APPENDIX B

U.S. CONGRESS JOINT RESOLUTION 295 TO CALL FOR THE
REMOVAL OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES
FROM THE PERSIAN GULF

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 28, 1987

Mr. GONZALEZ introduced the following joint resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

JOINT RESOLUTION

To call for the removal of the United States Armed Forces
from the Persian Gulf

Whereas Iraq and Iran have been in a state of war for
more than six years and have attacked more than 300 tankers,
freighters and other vessels of foreign nations in the
Persian Gulf during that period of hostilities;

Whereas, United States naval vessels equipped for
combat have been introduced into the Persian Gulf;

Whereas on May 17, 1987 the United States frigate USS
Stark was attacked in the Persian Gulf by an Iraqi warplane,
resulting in the death of 37 U.S. crewmen;

Whereas the United States has promised to protect ships
of friendly and nonbelligerent nations in the Persian Gulf;

Whereas the United States has agreed to sail Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf under the American flag; "and I might say by way of parenthesis that Kuwait is an ally of Iraq," and

Whereas Iranian officials have stated that Iran will continue to attack shipping in the Persian Gulf, whether or not such ships and under the United States flag; Now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress hereby determines that the requirements of sections 4(a)(1) and 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution have become operative. Hence, the President of the United States is hereby directed to remove United States Armed Forces from the Persian Gulf within sixty days after the enactment of this resolution unless Congress declares war, or extends the period by law.

APPENDIX C

U.S. CONGRESS HOUSE RESOLUTION 194 URGING THE PRESIDENT TO
SEEK A MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROTECTING NON-BELLIGERENT
SHIPPING IN THE PERSIAN GULF

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 11, 1987

Mr. DOWNEY of New York (for himself, Mr. STUDDS, and Mr. LEACH of Iowa) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Urging the President to seek a meeting of the United Nations Security Council for the purpose of protecting nonbelligerent shipping in the Persian Gulf.

Resolved, That (a) the House of Representatives urges the President to seek --

(1) a meeting of the United Nations Security Council for the purpose of establishing a United Nations peacekeeping naval force for the purpose of protecting nonbelligerent shipping in the Persian Gulf, and

(2) an immediate end to the Iran-Iraq war.

(b) The House of Representatives also urges the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and all members of the United Nations Security Council to support the establishment of such a naval force as an effective instrument in bringing greater stability to the present situation in the Persian Gulf.

APPENDIX D

UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION 598
of 20 July 1987

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolution 582 (1986),

Deeply concerned that, despite its calls for a cease-fire, the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq continues unabated, with further heavy loss of human life and material destruction.

Deploring the initiation and continuation of the conflict,

Deploring also the bombing of purely civilian population centres, attacks on neutral shipping or civilian aircraft, the violation of international humanitarian law and other laws of armed conflict, and, in particular, the use of chemical weapons contrary to obligations under the 1925 Geneva Protocol,

Deeply concerned that further escalation and widening of the conflict may take place,

Determined to bring to an end all military actions between Iran and Iraq,

Convinced that a comprehensive, just, honourable and durable settlement should be achieved between Iran and Iraq.

Recalling the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular the obligation of all Member States to settle their international disputes by peaceful

means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered,

Determining that there exists a breach of the peace as regards the conflict between Iran and Iraq,

Acting under Articles 39 and 40 of the Charter,

1. Demands that, as a first step towards a negotiated settlement, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq observe an immediate cease-fire, discontinue all military actions on land, at sea and in the air, and withdraw all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries without delay;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to dispatch a team of United Nations observers to verify, confirm and supervise the cease-fire and withdrawal and further requests the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements in consultation with the Parties and to submit a report thereon to the Security Council;

3. Urges that prisoners-of-war be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities in accordance with the Third Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949;

4. Calls upon Iran and Iraq to co-operate with the Secretary-General in implementing this resolution and in mediation efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and honourable settlement, acceptable to both sides, of all outstanding issues, in accordance with the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations;

5. Calls upon all other States to exercise the utmost restraint and to refrain from any act which may lead to further escalation and widening of the conflict, and thus to facilitate the implementation of the present resolution;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to explore, in consultation with Iran and Iraq, the question of entrusting an impartial body with inquiring into responsibility for the conflict and to report to the Council as soon as possible;

7. Recognizes the magnitude of the damage inflicted during the conflict and the need for reconstruction efforts, with appropriate international assistance, once the conflict is ended and, in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to assign a team of experts to study the question of reconstruction and to report to the Council;

8. Further requests the Secretary-General to examine, in consultation with Iran and Iraq and with other States of the region, measures to enhance the security and stability of the region;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to keep the Council informed on the implementation of this resolution;

10. Decides to meet again as necessary to consider further steps to ensure compliance with this resolution.

Adopted unanimously at the
2750th meeting.

APPENDIX E
NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 189

ON

THE PERSIAN GULF

(Presented by the Political Committee)

The Assembly,

Deploring continuing attacks on innocent shipping and loss of life in the Persian Gulf;

Convinced that the interests of neither Iraq nor Iran, the other Gulf States, or the international community at large, are served by prolongation of this dangerous and destructive conflict;

Concerned about the potential for further escalation of violence;

Stressing the vital security interests of all nations in assuring the uninterrupted flow of oil;

Firmly committed to the principle of freedom of the high seas and the right of innocent passage;

Welcoming the efforts of the United Nations and others to achieve a peaceful resolution of the war, including the efforts of United Nations Secretary-General Xavier Perez de Cuellar;

Acknowledging the national efforts of Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States in deploying naval units to protect shipping and their political efforts to exert a stabilizing influence;

Noting the consultations between member states of the Western European Union regarding security in the Gulf, and the variety of approaches taken by member states toward the question of foreign naval deployments in the Gulf;

Urges member governments and parliaments of the North Atlantic Alliance:

1. to support a continuation of the role of the United Nations in seeking a peaceful resolution of the conflict;
2. to exert all efforts to press for an immediate ceasefire and early termination of the war;
3. to stand ready to apply enforcement actions; including an embargo on all arms exports, in furtherance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 598 calling for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire, withdrawal of all Iraqi and Iranian forces to internationally recognized boundaries without delay, and the establishment of a framework for peace, and
4. to assist in the self-defence and security efforts of Gulf nations.

Adopted at the thirty-third
Annual Session (1987)

APPENDIX F
NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATION 87

ON

NATO AND PUBLIC OPINION

(Presented by the Civilian Affairs Committee)

The Assembly,

Recalling its Recommendations 83 of 1984, 85 of 1985 and 86 of 1986;

Appreciating the progress made in arms control and disarmament negotiations, particularly the recent agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on the double-zero option, together with the release of a few prisoners of conscience by the USSR and certain of its allies, and hoping that this is the harbinger of substantial advances;

Noting that public opinion in member countries of the Alliance considers the likelihood of a world conflict to be receding, and that the image of a Soviet expansionist policy is tending to fade, in particular as, result of the effective public relations campaign mounted by its new leaders;

Desiring that this favourable development should not bring about a decline of interest in and support for defence policies among the public opinions of Atlantic Alliance member countries;

Concerned by the effect on public opinion of the measures and counter-measures taken by the governments and parliaments in order to improve their respective positions in international economic competition, and emphasizing that the effects of "outbidding" in this area can only be injurious to Atlantic solidarity in all its forms, particularly where reflected in new restrictive and protectionist legislation; and recalling the crucial role of parliaments in this respect;

Convinced that the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station was instrumental in accelerating the misgivings harboured by Western public opinion concerning the strategy of flexible response;

Aware that the state and trends of public opinion in the sixteen Alliance countries regarding the issues of international security and national defence are not known with sufficient precision;

Acknowledging that the major responsibility for information on such matters lies with the elected governments of the member countries; but

Emphasizing the importance of a technical public information organ at the common disposal of the sixteen member countries of the Atlantic Alliance;

URGES member governments of the North Atlantic Alliance:

1. to launch a programme of public information on the policy and strategic options of the Atlantic Alliance, in particular for the voters of all the political parties;
2. to emphasize to public opinion in their respective countries, the contribution to peace, to the effectiveness of national defence and to the moderation of military expenditure, of the international solidarity through the Atlantic Alliance;

URGES the parliaments of the North Atlantic Alliance:

1. to authorize special budget appropriations for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation to commission an opinion survey to discover the state and trends of public opinion concerning defence and international security in the sixteen member countries of the Atlantic Alliance;
2. to set up a parliamentary consultative structure, utilising the experience of the North Atlantic Assembly, to contribute to the prevention, or at least the resolution, of misunderstandings in the transatlantic relationship;

RECOMMENDS that the North Atlantic Council:

1. appreciably increase -- within the NATO civil budget -- funds allocated for information activities, whether the civil budget as a whole is increased or not;
2. commission an opinion survey to take stock of the state and trends of public opinion regarding international security and national defence in the sixteen member

countries of the Atlantic Alliance, both generally and among significant subgroups such as women, young people, ethnic minorities, etc., the questionnaires for which could be prepared jointly by the international secretariats of NATO and the North Atlantic Assembly; URGES the national delegations to the North Atlantic Assembly to request their national parliaments to authorize the budget appropriations necessary to conduct such a poll.

Adopted at the thirty-third
Annual Session (1987)

APPENDIX G
INFORMATION LETTER

Letter dated 31st August 1987 from Mr. H. van den Broek,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
to Mr. Charles Goerens, President of the Assembly of Western
European Union on the situation in the Gulf.

The Hague, 31st August 1987

Dear President,

In view of the interest often expressed by the Assembly in the implications that crises occurring in other regions may have for Europe and bearing in mind our discussion in The Hague on 7th July 1987, I wish to inform you personally as follows.

On 20th August, the presidency convened a group of senior officials from the ministries for foreign affairs and defence of the member states of WEU to consider the situation in the Gulf. The presidency acted in accordance with Article VIII of the modified Brussels Treaty and the decision taken in Rome in October 1984 to hold consultations whenever necessary on the implications for Europe of crises in other regions of the world. To my knowledge, this is the first time such a meeting has been held. We agreed to consider these matters in more depth in order to bring about

greater co-operation.

For your information and that of the Assembly, I enclose the guidelines for the press agreed upon at the close of the meeting on 20th August.

Yours sincerely,

signed: Hans van den Broek

Press guidelines for the presidency

1. At the invitation of the Netherlands, which chairs Western European Union, high officials from the ministries for foreign affairs and defence of the member states met in The Hague on 20th August 1987 to consider the different aspects of the situation in the Gulf area in the context of the current efforts of the United Nations to bring an end to the Iraq-Iran conflict. This meeting was held pursuant to Article VIII of the WEU treaty and, more recently, to the decision taken by ministers in Rome in October 1984 to consider whenever appropriate the implications for Europe of crises in other regions of the world.
2. We had a thorough and useful exchange that contributed to a harmonisation of views. It was agreed to continue this process of concertation.
3. It was stressed that Security Council Resolution 598 should be fully implemented forthwith so as to bring the conflict between Iraq and Iran to an end. Member countries

of WEU will continue to support all efforts aimed at achieving this. In this context they reiterated their support for the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

4. Europe's vital interests require that the freedom of navigation in the Gulf be assured at all times. The member states strongly condemned all actions contrary to that principle.

5. Participants took note of the measures already undertaken or envisaged by individual member countries. They agreed to continue to consult each other and exchange information in order to further develop their co-operation.

Meeting of 15th September 1987 on the situation in the Gulf

Press guidelines for the presidency

At the invitation of the Netherlands, which chairs the Western European Union, and pursuant to the decision they took at their meeting of 20th August 1987 to continue to consult each other and exchange information in order to further develop their co-operation, high officials of the ministries for foreign affairs and defence of the member states met in The Hague on 15th September 1987.

They had a thorough exchange of views on recent developments in the Gulf and the efforts being undertaken by the United Nations to bring to an end the conflict between Iraq and Iran. They again stressed that Security Council

Resolution 598 should be fully implemented forthwith. They will continue to support the efforts of the Secretary-General and of the Security Council.

They underlined the importance they attach to the principle of freedom of navigation. They noted the decisions taken by some member countries since the last meeting to commit naval forces to the Gulf region.

Participants reiterated their decision to continue the process of concertation. It was agreed that representatives of the member countries of WEU will continue to meet to exchange information and to discuss related issues.

Meeting of 14th October 1987 on the situation in the Gulf

Press guidelines

High officials from the ministries of foreign affairs and defence of the member states of WEU met in The Hague on 14th October 1987 to pursue their consultation on matters pertaining to the situation in the Gulf area.

They noted that the navies of five member countries will be active in the region. They discussed how to improve their contacts in order to enhance co-ordination on the practical/technical level, fully respecting the national character of their respective activities.

They agreed to continue their consultations.

APPENDIX H

WEU PRESS GUIDELINES FOR THE PRESIDENCY

WEU meeting on the Gulf of 15th February 1988:

Press guidelines for the Presidency

High officials from the ministries of foreign affairs and defence of the member states of the Western European Union met on 15th February 1988 at The Hague. They again underlined the need to maintain solidarity.

They reviewed developments in the Gulf region since their last meeting on 7th December 1987, and reaffirmed their intention to further deepen their consultation process, and to consider possibilities for rationalisation, fully respecting the national character of their respective missions.

They reviewed the activities of the naval points of contact for intensifying co-ordination in mine counter-measure activities between WEU member nations in the Gulf.

The next meeting of the naval points of contact will be held in Paris.

WEU meeting on the Gulf of 11th May 1988:

Press guidelines for the Presidency

Following the statement adopted by the Ministerial Council of the Western European Union at its meeting of 19th April 1988 in The Hague, high officials from the ministries of foreign affairs and defence of member states met on 11th

May 1988 at The Hague to discuss recent developments in the Gulf.

They reiterated the importance of maintaining the freedom of navigation and safety of shipping in the Gulf.

They noted that the WEU members which maintain a naval presence in the Gulf provide, in accordance with long-standing time-honoured maritime traditions, assistance to shipping in distress, in application of established international rules.

They expressed appreciation for all measures which could contribute to achieving those aims and they noted with great interest the recent statement of the United States Government in this respect.

They will continue their diplomatic efforts, particularly within the EPC framework, to support all endeavours towards the full and early implementation of Resolution 598 of the Security Council, which is the only framework for an overall solution to the problems raised by the Iraq-Iran conflict.

Statement on recent events in the Gulf

(19th April 1988)

The member states of WEU expressed their grave concern at the recent increase in hostilities in the Gulf following new mining activities and attacks against merchant shipping in the area.

They stress the necessity of respecting the principle of free navigation. Several member states contribute to the safeguard of this right by their maritime presence in the Gulf. The member states reaffirm the importance of such a contribution to the maintenance of freedom of navigation.

They urgently call for an immediate end to all mining and other hostile activities against shipping in international waters, taking into account that such activities can call for measures for self defence.

They will continue their diplomatic efforts, particularly within the EPC framework, to support all endeavours towards the full and early implementation of Resolution 598 of the Security Council, which is the only framework for an overall solution to the problems raised by the Iraq-Iran conflict.

APPENDIX I

INFORMATION LETTER

from Mr. Cahen, Secretary-General of WEU,
on the activities of the intergovernmental organs

(August-September 1988)

Dear President,

London, 12th October 1988

In my letter of 26th July 1988, I had the honour to review -- for you and the members of the parliamentary Assembly of WEU -- the main activities of the intergovernmental organs of WEU during the period June-July 1988.

You will find below a summary of these activities in August and September.

Like the previous one, this letter has been drafted and issued by me under my own responsibility.

While the summer recess naturally slowed down WEU's activities in August, it did not prevent it from following current events closely and reacting whenever necessary.

Thus, sustained attention was paid to developments in the war between Iran and Iraq and their impact on the situation in the Gulf and representatives of the seven member states met in London on 3rd August -- on the initiative of the British presidency -- to review the first real progress recorded in the search for a peaceful solution to the war and to draw the possible consequences for the presence in the region of warships from five of our member

states which are helping to ensure respect for freedom of navigation there.

On that occasion, they welcomed Iran's decision to accept Security Council Resolution 598. They expressed the hope that this would lead to the early, full implementation of the resolution under the aegis of the United Nations Secretariat-General.

They also studied the possible implications of this decision for the role of their naval forces in the Gulf. They expressed satisfaction at the solidarity that has been a characteristic of their activities in the Gulf. They agreed to follow developments, to keep each other informed and to meet again when necessary to consult each other in the same spirit of solidarity, with the aim of continuing to act in a concerted and coherent manner.

With the same concern for a concerted and coherent approach, member states continued their consultations in September.

There has been a continuous response to this joint political reflection in the form of technical co-ordination ensured, on the spot, between fleet commanders and, in the admiralties, between naval experts who met periodically.

All these procedures allowed actions by five member countries in the Gulf to be adapted harmoniously to an evolving situation.

It is important to specify that the two member states not present in the Gulf continued to show their WEU solidarity with the five others in the same way as before.

Yours sincerely,

signed: Alfred Cahen

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